

CLIFFHANGER



IN THIS ISSUE:
Overland with Kit Carson
The Lone Ranger
A Tribute to Robert Livingston
The Sammy McKim Story
Buster Crabbe
and more

#8

794-Ep. 2-14

New Books from Scarecrow Press

THE MYSTERY OF THE MASKED MAN'S MUSIC: A Search for the Music used on "The Lone Ranger" Radio Program, 1933-1954 by Reginald M. Jones, Jr. Published in 1987 with 233 pages, illustrated. \$20.00 hardbound 5 1/2 X 8 1/2 size.

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Serial synopsis by Paul Dellinger

Distributor Columbia
 Released. July 21, 1939
 Directors Sam Nelson & Norman Deming
 Producer Jack Fier
 Screenplay Joseph F. Poland & Ned Dandy
 Music Mischa Bakilenikoff

CAST

Bill Elliott Kit Carson
 Iris Meredith Carmelita
 Richard Fiske David Brent
 Bobby Clark Andy
 Trevor Bardette Arthur Mitchell
 LeRoy Mason John Baxter
 Olin Francis Pierre
 James Craig Tennessee
 Francis Sayles Dr. Parker
 Kenneth MacDonald Winchester
 Dick Curtis Drake
 Richard Botiller Natchez
 ????. Pegleg

Chapter Titles

1. Doomed Men
2. Condemned to Die
3. The Fight for Life
4. The Ride of Terror
5. The Path of Doom
6. Rendezvous with Death
7. The Killer Stallion
8. The Devil's Nest
9. Blazing Peril
10. The Black Raiders
11. Foiled
12. The Warning
13. Terror in the Night
14. Crumbling Walls
15. Unmasked

OVERLAND WITH KIT CARSON was the middle of Bill Elliott's three serials, all for Columbia. The first had been the previous year, in 1939, and was the one that gave Gordon Nance, who starred in this first one under the name, Gordon Elliott, the name which would follow him through his western movie career and through three studios.

That one was **THE GREAT ADVENTURES OF WILD BILL HICKOK**, in which the marshall of Abilene rounds up a terrorist gang known as the Phantom Raiders. In the Kit Carson serial, the outlaws would be known as the Black Raiders. In his third and last serial, **VALLEY OF VANISHING MEN** (1942), which was also his last starring film released by Columbia before Elliott (now known as "Wild Bill") switched to Republic, the villains were out to overthrow Benito Juarez as president of Mexico.

Between the first and second serials, Elliott starred in four westerns (the first, **IN EARLY ARIZONA**, was more or less a re-telling of the early Wyatt Earp story with the names changed). In all four movies, he packed a pair of pearl-handled pistols in the regular fashion, differing from the backwards-turned stag-handled six-shooters he wore as Hickok. As Kit Carson, he returned to his original form of pistolery and kept it throughout his B-western at Columbia and Republic. The two butt-forward guns became his trademark, and they originated in his first two serials. When Republic moved him up to A-westerns, that changed in some of his films. His name also changed from "Wild Bill" to "William." Both the reversed pistols and "Wild Bill" moniker returned when he moved to Mongram/Allied Artists, where he completed his western movie career (his last five films at Allied Artists were detective movies, in which he became plain Bill Elliott and played a police lieutenant).

Before his "Wild Bill Elliott" and "Red Ryder" series at Republic, Elliott played various "Wild Bills" at Columbia. In his first four after the "Kit Carson" serial, he played "Wild Bill Saunders," a tie-in with his first serial. In the next five, the Saunders ploy was dropped and Elliott again became

"Wild Bill Hickok." Except for his roles as Bill Boone (descendant of "Daniel"), Dave Crockett (son of "Davey"), a Mountie named Bill Cameron and a cleaned-up version of Joaquin Murietta (the only time he wore a mustache except for his pre-starring days) and of course the final serial where he became "Wild Bill Tolliver," Elliott played Hickok for the rest of his time at Columbia.

Iris Meredith, the studio's lovely leading lady in B-westerns and serials, had a Spanish name (Carmelita Gonzales) but, despite her hair being darkened, did not attempt the accent (it was explained in the first chapter that she was adopted by her Spanish father, but those who missed the opener may have wondered). In the last few chapters, her main job seemed to be dodging knives thrown by the mysterious Pegleg, leader of the Black Raiders.

Pegleg, now there was an interesting mystery villain. Trevor Bardette, an underrated actor who was probably

one of the best character actors to grace B-westerns at various studios, used his own voice as both Pegleg (with a false scar added to his face) and the bearded trapper, Mitchell (played with a French accent and higher-pitched voice); there was no dubbing to conceal the identity. Because Bardette was such a familiar face from other films to youngsters in the audience, much of the mystery element was removed -- but at least it gave young fans a chance to learn the actor's name, since the major characters appeared at the beginning of each chapter along with their names and roles.

Bardette's acting range was probably best explored at Republic, particularly in the Allan "Rocky" Lane series. He became a continuing character on 1950s television in "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp," with Hugh O'Brian, where he played Old Man Clanton -- patriarch of the clan that would eventually shoot it out with the Earps at the O.K. Corral.

The opening of each chapter left no doubt about



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Watch the greatest Indian
fighter of them all . . . in
one of the greatest serials
of all time!



"Kit Carson" being a slam-bang action serial. The pictures behind the credits flicked from rampaging Indians to stampeding buffalo to flaming wagons plunging over cliffs before the cast was even shown.

The first chapter set the tone for sweeping historical background, dealing with the exploration of American territory west of the Mississippi. The politicians in Washington debate whether it can be settled and held, which is when Kit Carson is proposed as the man who can successfully lead a wagon train heading west. A cavalry officer, Lt. Brent (Richard Fiske) carries the commission to Kit Carson, despite an attempt by Pegleg's men to assassinate Brent and keep the two men from meeting. Once they do, they work together to checkmate Pegleg's terrorist attacks against the settlers.

Kit becomes convinced that Pegleg is actually someone at the settlers' post. The suspects are plentiful -- a doctor (Francis Sayles), trapper (LeRoy Mason), a man named Winchester (played by Columbia's resident villain, Kenneth MacDonald) and others. Most of the chapters have Kit springing Pegleg's traps and then escaping them.

The Pegleg character has a number of gimmicks to keep him interesting, including the leg that gives him his name (but which was actually false, as Kit learns

when he tracks Pegleg to a tree stump and finds that the track of the peg vanishes and prints of two feet are visible), his coyote-like calls that tell his men when to attack and retreat, and finally his black killer stallion, Midnight, who stomps men into the ground when Pegleg rattles a noise-maker at him.

The last victim of this rattle is Pegleg's chief lieutenant, Drake (Dick Curtis), who pulls a gun to escape Pegleg's retribution for not properly carrying out orders. Drake makes it outside the cave where the Black Raiders are hiding, but a rattle from inside sends Midnight leaping over the corral fence where he is kept outside and running Drake down, literally.

Kit has captured a Black Raider named Bill and takes his place (which is the only time in the serial when Bill Elliott is called Bill). He lets himself be helped to escape and conducted to the cave hideout. Unfortunately, the real Bill escapes, too, and exposes him. The fight ends with a explosion that causes the roof of the cave to collapse, ending the 13th chapter. In number 14, there is no takeout -- Kit simply crawls out from under the debris, brushes himself off and goes on from there. (A lot of this goes on in the serial; Kit has the same nonchalant reaction at the end of Chapter 14 to being caught in the explosion of the powderhouse at the post). Much of the suspense was removed anyway by Columbia's mini-preview of next week's action.

While impersonating Bill, Kit learned of Pegleg's plan to wipe Stewart's Post once and for all. But the raiders have ridden off before he gets out of the cave. He beats them back by saddling and breaking Pegleg's own killer stallion, Midnight (the first black horse he would ride until his Red Ryder role at Republic, when he would be astride Thunder; he usually favored spotted horses and continued riding one in his pre-Ryder "Wild Bill Elliott" series at Republic).

Surviving the powderhouse blowup, Kit sets a trap for Pegleg by letting it be known that Carmelita saw who threw a knife at her earlier and would reveal the information as soon as she recovered from the shock. Carmelita had no idea who tried to kill her, but the trap works and Mitchell exposes his identity. He flees on Midnight, but Kit overtakes him on his pinto. They fight and Pegleg momentarily gets the upper hand. He is about to finish off Kit when, without a rattle or anything else, Midnight decides to finish off Pegleg instead.

The settling of the wilderness west of the Mississippi is assured, thanks to Kit Carson and the brave settlers of Stewart's Post. --PD

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of

"The LONE RANGER

SILVER
By HIMSELF
TONTO
CHIEF THUNDER-CLOUD



Above: A one sheet for the 1938 serial. On the front cover: This publicity photo from **THE LONE RANGER** serial shows the five actors who impersonated the Lone Ranger in the film. From top to bottom they are as follows: George Letz (later known as George Montgomery), Lee Powell (finally revealed as the real Lone Ranger), Herman Brix (later named Bruce Bennett), Hal Taliaferro (who was a star of silent pictures as Wally Wales), and Lane Chandler. [WOY Collection.] {Photo captions in this article were penned by David Rothel, author of *Who was That Masked Man*. We thank him for his efforts and help.}

The Lone Ranger

Synopsis by Paul Dellinger

Jerry Brown Robert Kortman

Technical Credits

Copyrighted 1938
Distributor Republic
Length 15 Chapters - B&W
Genre Western
Directors William Witney
and John English
Associate Producer Barry Shipman,
George Worthing Yates, Franklyn Adreon,
Ronald Davidson and Lois Eby
Based on the radio serial "The Lone Ranger"
by Fran Striker
Musical Director Alberto Colombo

Cast

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| The Lone Ranger | A Man of Mystery |
| Silver | Silver Chief |
| Tonto | Chief Thunder Cloud |
| Joan Blanchard | Lynn Roberts |
| Bob Stuart | Hal Taliaferro |
| Bert Rogers | Herman Brix |
| Allen King | Lee Powell |
| Dick Forrest | Lane Chandler |
| Jim Clark | George Letz |
| Mark Smith, alias Jeffries | Stanley Andrews |
| Blanchard | George Cleveland |
| Father McKim | William Farnum |
| Kester | John Merton |
| Sammy | Sammy McKim |
| Felton | Tom London |
| Drake | Ted Adams |
| Major Brennan | Allan Cavan |
| Captain Rance | Edmund Cobb |
| Taggart | Raphael Bennett |
| Snead | Maston Williams |
| Regan | Jack Rockwell |
| Haskins | Carl Stockdale |
| Marcus Jeffries (the real one) . . | Forbes Murray |
| White Feather | Iron Eyes Cody |
| Morley | Charles King |
| Morgan | Jack Perrin |
| Matt Clark | Murdock McQuarrie |
| Mrs. Clark | Jane Keckley |
| Brown | Reed Howes |
| Jailor | Duke Green |
| Gunman | Jack Kirk |
| Hobart | Bud Osborne |
| Frank Chrysler | Lafe McKee |

Introduction

The Lone Ranger began as a voice over radio station WXYZ in 1933, but nobody really knew what he looked like. That would be remedied in 1938, the year Republic brought the character to the screen in a big-budget fifteen chapter serial.

The character had appeared in book form by then. The first novel in the series, simply titled *The Lone Ranger*, has chief radio writer Fran Striker's name on the cover but inside the name is given as Gaylord Du-bois, with Striker credited as the radio writer only. Later editions of the book carried only Striker's name, as did the others in the series. That first writer, whoever he was, described the Lone Ranger as wearing a black half-mask and silver-mounted .45s.



Robert Livingston portrayed the Lone Ranger in the 1939 sequel **THE LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN**. (Republic). {All photos WOY Collection.}



Chief Thunder-Cloud and Lee Powell portray Tonto and the Lone Ranger in the 15 chapter Republic serial. A little-known fact is that Chief Thunder-Cloud's profile was used by Trans-Western Airways as the emblem for their famous Sky-Chief transport plane.

Illustrator Paul Laune provided a few more clues to eager readers. His drawing across the inside of the cover and extending onto the next page (as well as from the last page extending onto the inside of the back cover) showed a horseman in the upper left-hand corner aiming a pistol down toward a rifleman in the lower right-hand corner. That horseman is wearing the traditional cowboy hat and chaps, and the shadow from the hat-brim covers the upper part of his face—which is presumably where the mask is.

Then Laune confuses the issue with his frontispiece illustration facing the title page, showing the

Lone Ranger, astride Silver with gun in hand, riding in to break up a lynch mob. This time, the Lone Ranger is wearing a white handkerchief tied around the lower part of his face! Laune continued illustrating the series (the second volume, *The Lone Ranger and the Mystery Ranch*, came out the same year as Republic's serial) and usually got around his problem by showing only the back of the Lone Ranger's head, downplaying the mask as he had with the interior cover illustration. (That interior front and back cover illustration was used in many of the books which followed.) Except for what radio listeners could imagine or what readers could conjure up from the

book descriptions and Laune's indecisive illustrations, the Lone Ranger remained a man of mystery — which is how Republic would bill him in the serial.

That serial is hard to find these days. Alan G. Barbour, in his 1971 book on the westerns which has never been improved on by imitators, *The Thrill of It All*, says that all records of that serial and its sequel have disappeared from Republic's files as mysteriously as the Lone Ranger himself disappeared after every adventure. One guess as to why is that George W. Trendle, who oversaw the character's development on radio (and nearly two decades later on television),



The Lone Ranger (Lee Powell) and the ranchers hold off the bad guys in this scene from episode two of the serial. Almost unnoticed in the fracas is Frankie Marvin (second from the right in background). Frankie was a long-time friend of Gene Autry and appeared in bit parts in just about all of Autry's many pictures. Frankie and his brother Johnny played backup guitar on Autry's first recording. Apparently Frankie had the day off to help the Lone Ranger.

was upset by the character's unmasking at the end of the serial and did all he could to see that existing prints were destroyed – or at least not re-released.

If that is true, however, it did not stop Trendle from agreeing to let Republic do a second serial version, **THE LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN**, in 1939 – and the character was even less mysterious that time. The studio also released a 67 minute feature version of the first serial in 1940 titled **HI-YO SILVER**. But, unless some film collector out there has been sitting on prints of any of these, only bits and pieces of the

originals survive today. One was located overseas of the first serial, **THE LONE RANGER**, but it was incomplete, the quality was poor, and it had Spanish sub-titles all the way through.

A bit about the second serial first: **THE LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN** kept Chief Thunder Cloud as Tonto (and Silver Chief as the Lone Ranger's horse, Silver) but the rest of the cast was new. Screenwriters Barry Shipman, Franklyn Adreon and Ronald Davidson, who had been on the first serial's writing team, were joined by Sol Shor on this one, and Alberto Colombo was again musical director. And, of

course, the ace directing team of Witney and English was back.

But instead of the ensemble of Texans who assisted the Lone Ranger and Tonto in the first serial, the action in the second one centered around a trio of heroes – the Lone Ranger, Tonto, and Juan Vasquez.

All three of the actors involved had been, or would be, in other trio westerns. Republic brought in a new Lone Ranger for the second serial – Robert Livingston, who had been playing opposite "Crash" Corrigan and Max Terhune in Republic's Three Mesquiteers series dating back to



The Lone Ranger is ever ready to offer help to the weary and oppressed of the early West. Tonto stands guard as the Lone Ranger offers nourishment to an elderly pioneer lady as her anxious husband looks on.

1936. With Livingston moving up to leading roles of his own, his Mesquiteers role of "Stoney Brooke" was taken over in 1938 by John Wayne who would soon be moving up to better roles himself. (In the 1937 Mesquiteer film, **THE TRIGGER TRIO**, future "Dick Tracy" star Ralph Byrd substituted for Livingston who had been sidelined by an injury. The movie marked William Witney's first feature as a director.)

By 1940, Duncan Renaldo – who played Juan in the second serial – became a member of a revamped Three Mesquiteers (along with Raymond Hatton and Livingston, who had returned after John Wayne left). And Chief Thunder

Cloud became part of a similar trio at Monogram – the Trail Blazers, whose other members were Bob Steele (also a Mesquiteer at times) and Hoot Gibson.

Interestingly, in his post-serial appearances in the Mesquiteers films, Livingston would occasionally don a black half-mask and a brace of six-guns and ride a white horse where the scripters could think up a reason for the disguise. Usually referred to simply as "the masked rider," Livingston boldly confronted the citizen secretly behind the outlaws in one picture in broad daylight before townspeople. The accused man simply walked up to the Masked Rider and jerked off his mask, leaving Stoney Brooke's bare face hanging

out! It was so obvious that one wondered why nobody thought to respond that way to the Lone Ranger or the Durango Kid.

In the second serial, the Lone Ranger was more like Charles Starrett's Durango Kid character who would soon be the headliner in Columbia's westerns. Like Steve and Durango, it was the Lone Ranger and Bill Andrews (the character played by Livingston). Andrews masked and unmasked repeatedly before the movie audience, as well as before Tonto and Juan, although he did not reveal his identity in the final chapter before riding off to new adventures. The mystique of the radio character who was constantly masked



The Lone Ranger (Lee Powell) comes to the rescue of the heroine (Lynn Roberts) just in time to save her from being forced to marry the evil outlaw Jeffries (Stanley Andrews).

(unless in disguise) was thrown out entirely, which probably made Trendle even less happy the second time around.

The reason that Juan was brought in on the Lone Ranger's secret was due to an imposter Lone Ranger in chapter one of the second serial. The imposter, really working for the bad guys, has killed Juan's brother. Before the end of chapter one, Juan has avenged his brother by killing the bogus Lone Ranger. The imposter turns out to be a man named Logan (Carleton Young), who is really one of the Black Raiders – gunmen being used by villain Bart Dolan (Ralph Dunn) to drive out the nesters in San Ramon, New Mexico. Af-

ter Logan's dying confession of his impersonation, Bill reveals his Lone Ranger identity to Juan who shares in the serial heroics thereafter.

Bart Dolan is the nephew of cattle king Craig Dolan (J. Farrell MacDonald) who is also against the nesters but is unaware of Bart's terrorist tactics. Likewise in the dark is niece Sue Dolan, played by radio performer Jinx Falkenburg (billed in the cast as Jinx Falken), until a confrontation in which Bart shoots and wounds his uncle. Bart is finally killed in chapter 15 by his own explosives, and the cattlemen and homesteaders make peace as the Lone Ranger and Tonto ride off the serial screen for the last time.

In the serial, Duncan Renaldo

dresses in a black outfit not totally unlike the fancier one he would be wearing in later Cisco Kid movies. He would later play the Cisco Kid on television during many of the same years Clayton Moore was starring as TV's Lone Ranger, and both series are still enjoying reruns today.

So what did the Lone Ranger finally look like? The vest and chaps shown in practically all of the book artwork were gone, but the outfit was not like the matching blue outfit worn by Moore in the TV series and two color movies, either.

In both serials, the Lone Ranger wore a white hat, grayish-white shirt without pockets and with string laces instead of buttons on



Chief Thunder-Cloud and Lee Powell are ready for action in this publicity still. Chief Thunder-Cloud first became widely known as a concert singer, touring the United States and Europe between 1928 and 1932.

the upper chest. He wore a black bandana around his neck, and his two pistols in a studded gunbelt decorated with more conchos than the one Lash LaRue would later sport. As for the mask, it was the black half-mask across the eyes described in the books – but it also had netting-like material hanging below it, concealing the rest of the face much like the mask worn by John Carroll in Republic's 1937 serial, **ZORRO RIDES AGAIN**. (The Zorro character helped inspire Trendle's concept of a western masked man on radio.)

In the first serial, an all-concealing mask was almost a necessity. The audiences knew that the Lone Ranger was one of five co-heroes of the serial – Hal Taliaferro, who

had been a western leading man previously under the name Wally Wales; Herman Brix, an Olympic athlete whose roles included that of Tarzan and who would later be known as Bruce Bennett; Lee Powell, who would probably have carved out an impressive screen career but for his untimely death as a Marine in World War II in 1944; Lane Chandler, who would be a western leading man in some almost ludicrously-low budget film but became best-known as western character actor; and George Letz, who would go on to better things under the name George Montgomery.

But, until the last chapter, no audience could be sure which man was *the* Lone Ranger. It was almost a cliché in serials to have a variety of sus-

pects for the mystery villain, one of whom would get bumped off from time to time; this was the first serial in which the cliché was reversed, and it was the hero whose identity the viewers didn't know. (The gimmick would be used only once more, in Republic's 1943 serial, **THE MASKED MARVEL**. In that chapter-play, the Marvel was known to be one of four insurance investigators combatting Japanese sabotage, with only two of them surviving the final chapter. The Marvel was played by stuntman Tom Steele, unbilled in the cast, with Gayne Whitman dubbing the voice.)

Yakima Canutt, who played one of the villainous troopers (Ike Lewin), doubled for the masked



"They went that-a-way," says heroine Lynn Roberts to the Lone Ranger and Tonto. The popular leading lady was featured in many Westerns during the 1930s and '40s. Shortly after **THE LONE RANGER** serial she changed her screen name to Mary Hart. Eventually, she reverted back to Lynn Roberts for the balance of her career.

Lone Ranger in similar fashion to Tom Steele's Masked Marvel, and Billy Bletcher – whose deep voice belied his five-foot two-and-a-half inch stature – dubbed the Lone Rangers' voices in both serials. His worked reportedly impressed Trendle sufficiently for him to give some radio work to Bletcher and keep him on hand as an understudy to radio's Lone Ranger.

By the time of the **LONE RANGER** serial, the character had already had three radio voices – those of Jack Deeds, George Seaton and, from part-way through the first year until his death in 1941, Earle Graser who was doing it during the time both serials hit

the screens. Marcus "Brace" Beemer, who succeeded Graser and became radio's most famous Lone Ranger voice, had narrated some of the early 1930s episodes but would not become radio's Lone Ranger until the 1940s. He continued in the role until the radio program ended in the mid-1950s, but lost out to Clayton Moore for the TV role.

Bletcher's voice was similar enough to Graser's (in fact, it was almost as deep as Beemer's) so the serial audiences would know they were watching their radio hero in action.

Lynn Roberts, as the daughter of a federal investigator held captive by a false federal finance commissioner,

provides leading lady honors for the first serial. Stanley Andrews, later to be TV's Old Ranger on "Death Valley Days," played the outlaw who tried to bleed Texas by impersonating that commissioner. The William Tell Overture, which has been associated with every Lone Ranger appearance since the first radio show, figured prominently in the serial as did new action music by Alberto Colombo. Some of Colombo's music was acquired by Trendle for use in the radio series as background music, notably the score played during the ambush of the rangers in the first chapter. While Livingston broke tradition in the second serial



Lee Powell and Herman Brix are the only Rangers left of the original five in this solemn scene from episode fourteen. George Cleveland (left), young Sammy McKim, and Lynn Roberts join the Rangers and Tonto in paying tribute to those Rangers who have died in the fight for justice.

not only by unmasking but by shooting to kill (unlike radio's Lone Ranger who shot to wound or disarm), the first serial Lone Ranger may or may not have killed some of the men he dropped in gunfights. It was not always obvious.

The Colombo music would not be the first to follow the Lone Ranger from screen to other mediums. Some of the Republic music in the early Three Mesquiteer films turned up in Clayton Moore's TV series.

Chapter One Heigh-Yo Silver!

The title of the first chapter is ap-

propriate. No sooner has the fanfare from the old Republic clock tower stopped than we see a masked rider on white horse, speeding from left to right on the screen (the same way his successor would do in the opening of the TV series in a little more than a decade) and a deep voice cries out "Hi-yo, Silver, away!"

The voice (dubbed by Earle Graser sound-alike Billy Bletcher) cries out "Hi-yo Silver" again in a closeup, this time showing the masked man riding right-to-left, and still again as a riderless Silver ("played by Silver Chief," the credit says) rears up. The musical fanfare does not start out with the traditional William Tell Overture, although it does ease into bits and

pieces of it mixed with Colombo's original music (which would soon be transferred to the radio show).

The credits are unusual in that the first to be identified is not an actor, but "The Lone Ranger" himself, followed by "Silver, played by Silver Chief," and then by "Tonto" as Chief Thunder Cloud is shown but not identified by name. Then, at last, cast members are shown as their actual names flash onto the screen . . . Lynn Roberts (also known occasionally as Mary Hart), Stanley Andrews, George Cleveland, and William Farnum. And then we have a list of 12 cast members, starting with Chief Thunder Cloud and naming the five stars –



An unmasked Lee Powell is shown here with Tonto (Chief Thunder-Cloud). Powell was originally "discovered" for movies by a talent scout who saw him eating in a restaurant and asked if he would be interested in a screen test.

Hal Taliaferro, Herman Brix, Lee Powell, Lane Chandler and George Letz – followed by John Merton, Sammy McKim, Tom London, Raphael Bennet, Maston Williams and Frank McGlynn, Sr. Now, of those names beneath Chief Thunder Cloud's name is the Lone Ranger – but which one?

The rest of the credits unfold with the Lone Ranger galloping behind them, fading into the chapter title and a foreword about lawless bands of deserters from both armies in the closing days of the Civil War waging guerilla warfare on an already-weakened South. There follows a series of outlaw attacks on covered wagons, and the shooting not only of the man but also his wife (usually a no-no in

westerns) amid the general brutality.

We move to the outlaw encampment of former Confederate army captain Mark Smith (Stanley Andrews), an unkempt individual who tells his similarly-ragged men that they will have a great future preying on Texas. More raids follow. Back at the camp, Smith summons a man named Snead (Maston Williams) to his tent. He criticizes Snead for hanging around the camp instead of being out scouting for more information on prospective targets. Snead proves his worth as Smith's men bring in a well-dressed prisoner -- Marcus Jeffries (Forbes Murray), a federal commissioner of finance sent to enforce tax collections in post-war Texas. Once Smith takes the man's identification and learns

who he is, he directs his men to take Mr. Jeffries outside and "show him that view." A shot rings out seconds later, as Smith -- fingering his whiskers and ragged clothing -- proclaims himself to be Marcus Jeffries, the newly-appointed commissioner of finance. He can use his usurped identity to pillage Texas in a seemingly-legal way.

(Most synopses of this serial list the villain as Jeffries, which is the name Smith goes by from this point on. In a sequence cut from the film, Abraham Lincoln -- to have been played by Frank McGlynn, Sr., who got screen credit even though he didn't appear -- sends George Blanchard, played by George Cleveland, to



Stuntman Yakima Canutt (who doubled all the Rangers in the serial) is about to pounce on an unsuspecting outlaw in this scene from **THE LONE RANGER** serial.

Texas to check up on what he is hearing about Jeffries' activities.)

He does so, putting uniforms on "Captain" Kestner (John Merton) and "Sergeant" Felton (Tom London) and the rest of his men to give their hoodlum tactics an aura of respectability -- even when those tactics include shooting down prisoners in cold blood after telling them to ride away. The bogus Jeffries is entertaining guests in his mansion at Pecos when he glimpses the unsavory Snead in a hallway. Violently signaling Snead to get out of sight, he meets him later and learns from Snead that a band of Texas Rangers are on the way to look into complaints concerning Jeffries' troopers.

Jeffries uses Snead to set up an

ambush. Snead pretends to have been beaten and robbed when he meets up with Captain Rance (Edmund Cobb) and his some 20 rangers. He travels with the rangers long enough to learn where they are camping and pass the word to Kestner, who leads an ambush on the men at Grant Pass.

(Basically, this is the same story that became the origin for radio's Lone Ranger, except only six rangers were involved and their leader was Captain Dan Reid, older brother of the man who would eventually become the Lone Ranger. They were pursuing an outlaw gang led by Butch Cavendish, and their guide, a man named Collins, set up the ambush with Cavendish in Bryant's Gap. Except for the name of the cap-

tain and the location, the size of the forch involved and the lack of any younger brother of the captain being mentioned, the sequence is about as close as any serial has come to its source material.)

The rangers managed to pick a few outlaws off the rocks above but, one by one, they fall in a hail of lead. Rance empties his pistol at the attackers, throws it down and runs to pick up one dropped by a fallen comrade -- only to be dropped himself by a fatal bullet.

That night, with funeral music in the background, a figure in buckskins comes upon the slaughter but finds one man alive. He carries the man to a cave and nurses him back to health. The man's face is covered with bandages when he



In this scene from the sequel **THE LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN**, the Lone Ranger fights with two outlaws.

regains consciousness, and is told by his rescuer, the Indian Tonto, that all the other rangers are dead. The man's fist closed around a ranger badge as he vows (in Bletcher's voice) never to rest until those deaths are avenged.

Following the showing of the incident where some prisoners are shot by Jeffries' troops, we see for the first time in the story the fabulous masked rider of the plains astride his white horse. (Neither the story of how he got Silver or why he chose to remain anonymous is mentioned in the serial version.) There is a cry of "Heigh-yo Silver, away," as the Lone Ranger overtakes two of Jeffries' plunderers and jumps them both off their horses. He begins riding to various settlements and shoot-

ing, in true Paul Revere style, for them to bring their weapons to an old stockade and fortify it. It is there that the residents of Pecos will make their stand against Jeffries. After another "Hi-yo Silver," he rides off as the Texans settle into their fortification.

"The Lone Ranger is making you all look like fools!" Jeffries rages at his men. "And not only that, he got the ranchers to fortify the old stockade . . . and a special investigator named Blanchard is on his way here from Washington. Those Texans must be cleared out of that stockade before he gets here. If Blanchard talks to them, he'll have the federal cavalry on us in no time. Now get out, all of you!" He has Snead await further instructions, to join the group at the stockade and keep his eyes

open.

"I'll do better than that," the traitorous Snead says. "I think I know who the Lone Ranger is. He must be one of the five Texans I've been watchin'." He suggests a play to lure them to town to buy supplies and have them arrested.

At the stockade, Snead outlines a plan to the five men -- Bob Stuart (Hal Taliaferro), Bert Rogers (Herman Brix), Allen King (Lee Posell), Dick Forrest (Lane Chandler) and Jim Clark (George Letz) -- to secure the needed food and ammunition. The plan is never fully outlined, just as it is never explained exactly how Snead has narrowed the Lone Ranger's identity down to these five men. But all five readily agree to go along and help him.

Once in town, when they split up to go to the various stores, they find themselves trapped at gunpoint by Jeffries' troopers and summarily thrown in jail.

"I have reason to believe that one of you is the Lone Ranger," Jeffries tells the men, standing outside their cell with an escort. "Now, if the Lone Ranger will admit his identity, it will save the others from execution." When there is no answer, he goes on: "All right – I'll give you fifteen minutes to think it over," and marches out. But Snead hides himself against a wall outside the cell, and listens.

We see the shadow of a tall man in a hat, and we hear the familiar deep voice of the masked man: "I am the Lone Ranger."

"You?" another prisoner says.

"Yes. I didn't tell Jeffries because I wanted to speak to you men first. There is a lot to be accomplished. Texas needs loyal fighters."

"But she needs the Lone Ranger most of all," another says.

"That's right," adds a third. "Jeffries won't keep his word, anyway. We're in this thing together and we'll stick together."

The Lone Ranger protests, "I can't let you die on my account."

"If we die," says one of the others, "it'll be together. And for Texas."

"You men have the spirit of Rangers," says the Lone Ranger. "I am glad."

Snead wastes no time in reporting to Jeffries. "... And while it was too late to see who was doin' the talkin', one of 'em admitted to bein' the Lone Ranger."

"Make preparations for their execution immediately," Jeffries says.

The men are brought out to face a firing squad. But the order is interrupted by the arrival of Blanchard (George Cleveland) and his daughter, Joan (Lynn Roberts). Snead gloats to the prisoners as he leaves: "Any messages you want me to take to the stockade? I'm on my way there with some troopers to surprise your friends.

You'll all be together again by evenin'."

Taking advantage of the delay caused by the stagecoach bearing Blanchard, Tonto signals the Texans in the courtyard from behind a wall. They nudge one another and watch as Tonto, using fairly obvious sign language, signals that he will grab the stage and ride off, giving them a chance to jump aboard.

It works. The stage roars out with the five clambering onto it, to the strains of the William Tell Overture. Jeffries orders his men to pursue it. Each of the five men and Tonto jump from the stage to the back of one of the six horses and, on a command from the voice of the Lone Ranger, the kingpin is pulled causing the coach to wreck behind them and block further pursuit in a narrow gorge. Using the mounts freed by the stage, the men ride to where Tonto has Silver and his own horse waiting.

The Lone Ranger (off-screen) tells a smiling Tonto to give him his mask and guns quickly. They must warn the people at the stockade.

Snead is let in by a stockade guard at a side gate. Waiting his chance, he clobbers the guard from behind, and then sets a dynamite charge beneath the gate as Kestner and a force of mounted men wait outside out of sight.

The Lone Ranger races ahead of the others on the powerful Silver, with Tonto galloping second in the lead. But Silver arrives well ahead of everyone else, and the Lone Ranger lassoes the wooden stakes at the top of a wall and climbs up. He lands above Snead just as the traitor has lit the fuse. Hearing the noise, Snead looks up just as the Lone Ranger jumps down on him. Snead pulls a knife, but the Lone Ranger wrests it away and knocks him to one side. But the dynamite goes off, knocking the masked man to the ground and apparently finishing Snead.

Getting up, the Lone Ranger draws his guns to make a stand at the remains of the blasted gate.

Kestner's men charge into the fort as the Lone Ranger calmly shoots at them, and it appears that they will ride over him into the stockade.

Chapter Two Thundering Earth

Help comes from the occupants of the stockade, and they drive the troopers off.

The fleeing troopers manage to capture Tonto, however. Kestner has the Indian stripped to the waist and beaten, but Tonto won't talk. Then the Lone Ranger arrives on the scene, getting the drop on the troopers. He has Tonto cover him, then hands Tonto his own gunbelt and offers Kestner a chance for a fair fight. Kestner is thoroughly beaten by the masked man. The Lone Ranger then ties the men onto their horses and sends them off to town, with a note to Blanchard explaining the situation.

Blanchard learns from the note what is really happening, but the assassination of Lincoln (played by Frank McGlynn, Sr., and given a billing in the cast, but never seen on the screen sending Blanchard on his mission due to a cut in the first chapter script) leaves Blanchard temporarily without authority.

The ranchers begin to move out from the stockade, and Jeffries' men plant dynamite along a gorge to bury their wagons in a landslide. But the five Texans learn of his plans. (By now, the five no longer wear individual clothing, but are all dressed in light shirts and dark trousers matching one another, and each also carries two black-handled pistols. The Lone Ranger wears a whiter hat and flashier pistols and holsters but, otherwise, is decked out like the "uniform" adopted by the four men and himself in their everyday appearances -- all of which adds to audience confusion as to which of the five is the Lone Ranger.)

Racing to the scene, the Lone

Ranger arrives too late to stop the fuse from being lit. As he fights with a trooper, the dynamite goes off.

Chapter Three The Pitfall

But Tonto has managed to warn the wagon train, and it races away from the thundering earth. The Lone Ranger also escapes injury.

Blanchard and his daughter, held captive by the troopers, are officially informed of Lincoln's death. He makes it clear to them that it is he, Jeffries, who now holds power in Texas. Still determined to get the Lone Ranger, he arranges an elaborate trap -- a pit dug in the earth, big enough for a man and horse.

Joan escapes Jeffries' clutches in an attempt to warn the Lone Ranger, but he is already aware of the pit. She is not aware of where it is, however, and is riding toward it when the Lone Ranger sees her. Riding Silver, he tries to intercept her but they reach the pit at the same time and both fall in.

Chapter Four Agent of Treachery

The masked man and Joan climb out of the pit, unhurt. She returns to her father, but hopes to act as an agent for the Lone Ranger within Jeffries' stronghold.

Jeffries, meanwhile, has obtained the services of a vicious criminal named Black Taggart (Raphael Bennett), with plans to use him in the same way Snead was used in the setup to wipe out the original band of rangers. The five Texans save Taggart from what they think is a kidnapping by Jeffries' men.

Taggart says he has information about Jeffries which could help put him away, and will divulge it to the Lone Ranger. He agrees to meet the masked man at an isolated cabin. Jeffries' troopers secretly surround it before the meeting is to

take place.

But the Lone Ranger realizes the trap he is in, once he meets with Taggart inside. There is a fight. The troopers move in and capture the man they think is the Lone Ranger. It turns out to be Taggart, dressed in the masked man's clothing. The real Lone Ranger, in Taggart's clothes, covers them. But one of the troopers manages to throw a rock at him, staggering him as the others move in for the kill.

Chapter Five The Steaming Cauldron

Tonto rides into the troopers, and Silver also charges in to break them up. The disguised Lone Ranger leaps into the saddle, and the duo escapes.

Joan has written a note to Father McKim (William Farnum), a padre, having seen Taggart in a nearby room dressed in the Lone Ranger's clothing. She drops the note there, and Taggart recovers and reads it: "The Lone Ranger: Joan and I can escape today. Meet us at the old Shelby mill at three. Blanchard." He substitutes a false note, asking the Lone Ranger to rescue Father McKim at a mill, which is also the storage place for Jeffries' supply of powder. The message is delivered to the cave hideaway of the five Texans by pigeon, one of those Joan had seen caged in the chapel courtyard where the padre is stationed.

The false note draws the five men into Jeffries' trap, and Jim Clark is wounded. Taggart trails him back to the cave, and gets the drop on him. "Yes, I'm the Lone Ranger," the wounded Jim replies to Taggart's question. Taggart raises his pistol to finish Jim off -- and a shot rings out, echoing through the caves.

The shot was fired not by Taggart, but by the Lone Ranger who has ridden into the cave on Silver. It knocks Taggart's pistol from his hand, and Taggart flees deeper into the cave network. "Sorry," Jim tells the Lone Ranger. "I had him fooled for a minute." "Take it easy, old man," the

Lone Ranger tells him -- and goes off after Taggart.

Taggart and the Lone Ranger meet near a geyser, and battle face to face. It appears that the Lone Ranger has been knocked into the geyser and will be innundated by it.

Chapter Six Red Man's Courage

But it is Taggart who falls into the geyser and dies. The Lone Ranger returns to Jim's side, and we see a replay of the exchange from the previous chapter: "Sorry -- I had him fooled for a minute." "Take it easy, old man."

But Jim dies, and he is buried in the cave as the Lone Ranger and his identically-garbed companions -- now only three of them, plus Tonto -- stand by the cross that marks his resting place. "You were a brave unselfish man, Jim Clark," the Lone Ranger intones, "and gladly you gave up your life for the people of Texas. We promise that the ideals you fought and died for shall continue to be our ideals until the power of Marcus Jeffries is forever broken. I pledge that your death shall not go unavenged."

(The pledge is similar to the one from the surviving lone ranger in the first chapter ambush. The death of one of the nominal heroes of the serial -- perhaps even one that some members of the audience had come to believe might be the Lone Ranger -- came as a shock to viewers. This departure from the serial norm is probably one reason this chapter-play is so memorable to those who first saw it in theaters.)

Jeffries is out to get the Lone Ranger and, knowing that a silver bullet is the masked man's trademark, has his men kill some friendly Indians and leave silver bullets near the bodies. Other Indians, learning of this, move against the masked man and end up capturing Tonto. They tie him to a stake and set a fire around him, even as the

Lone Ranger rides to the rescue. They burst into the Indian camp, but Silver trips over a fallen tree, throwing the masked rider into the midst of the Indians bent on his death.

Chapter Seven Wheels of Disaster

But the Lone Ranger manages to convince the chief that neither he or Tonto had anything to do with the death of the other braves.

Bob, Bert, Allen and Dick decide to try and capture the powder which Jeffries is removing from its hiding place. They get the first wagon before Jeffries decides to place Joan on the next one, beside the driver, to keep the attackers from firing at it.

The Lone Ranger tries to take the wagon from behind, climbing into the rear and disposing of the driver that way. But in the fight, the wagon runs loose, overturns and explodes.

Chapter Eight Fatal Treasure

The Lone Ranger manages to jump clear before the wreck. Then he and Tonto, with their remaining three allies, plan to frustrate Jeffries' next plot, following another message to the cave by pigeon from Joan: "Jeffries planning to rob treasury silver from Pecos bank tonight."

The silver is from taxes collected by the bogus Jeffries, which he plans to keep for himself rather than the government he supposedly represents. But the Lone Ranger and Tonto beat him to the punch, stealing the silver from his men. They are closely pursued, and must unload the heavy silver which they do into a well.

The next day, the four Texans disguise themselves as Mexicans who go to the well to carry water. They pretend to load water onto kegs carried by burros, but actually have loaded the silver.

Allen and Bert depart with the burros, leaving Bob and Dick behind momentarily. The two Texans still in the well are discovered by Jeffries' troopers. A cannon is fired at the well, blowing it up.

Chapter Nine The Missing Spur

Bob and Dick escape by a passage off to the side of the well, but Jeffries is unaware of this. He gloats to Joan that she has lost two of her Texan allies. "Was . . . one of them the Lone Ranger?" she asks hesitantly. And Jeffries replies with what seems the utmost sincerity: "I hope so!"

The four Texans reassemble just in time to find themselves in a gunfight with Kestner and the troopers. The battle is stopped by a troop of U.S. cavalry, which takes all the participants to Fort Bently as prisoners. The one of the four who is the Lone Ranger with the aid of Tonto slips out of custody during darkness to make sure the silver is well hidden, while the other three cover for him. He is nearly captured and, in the fight with Kestner, loses one of his spurs.

The Lone Ranger manages to get back to his friends and assume his identity as one of them, but Kestner realizes the masked man has lost a spur and plans to prove his identity this way. He has all four Texans brought out, and finds one without both of his spurs.

Chapter Ten Flaming Fury

But closer inspection shows that the other three Texans also have a spur missing. They have anticipated Kestner's plan, and each has removed one of his spurs to correspond with the boots of the Lone Ranger. The next day, before Kestner can act further, they escape.

The foursome gets another pigeon message from Joan on their return to their cave hideaway: "Jeffries forcing me to marry him to save

father. J." With the aid of Father McKim, the Lone Ranger manages to stop the wedding. He also engages Jeffries in a fight, beating him thoroughly before Jeffries' troopers rush to help him.

Fleeing, the Lone Ranger and Tonto take cover in a barn. The troopers try to drive them out by setting it afire, and the two men seem doomed to a fiery death.

Chapter Eleven The Silver Bullet

The Lone Ranger and Tonto dig down into a pit below the barn's trapdoor as the structure burns, and re-emerge after the fire and troopers have gone.

Joe Cannon (Walter James), a blacksmith who has been making silver bullets for the Lone Ranger, is discovered at the job by Jeffries' men and killed.

The blacksmith's grandson, Sammy (Sammy McKim), tells Bob what happened to his uncle. Bob, the only one of the four Texans at the cave at the time, trails the killers into Pecos. The six are in a card game when Bob sees them in the Pecos cantina, led by Hobart (Bud Osborne). Joining the game, Bob drops three silver bullets -- the Lone Ranger's trademark -- into the pot. The men go for their guns, as does Bob. Taking cover behind a table, he drops some of them but is wounded.

By now, his friends have learned that he has gone in to face the killers alone. The Lone Ranger enters from a rooftop to help the wounded Bob. We see a shotgun aimed at his back . . .

Chapter Twelve Escape

The shotgun is wielded by Tonto, who uses it to shoot one of the outlaws. The Lone Ranger carries the wounded Bob over his shoulders up through the rooftop exit, with Tonto. As Tonto takes Bob back to their cave hideout,

the Lone Ranger unmask and joins the other two to finish the fight with the killers in the saloon.

Bob dies, and is buried in the cave alongside Jim Clark, as Allen, Bert and Dick stand with bowed heads. Back in Pecos, Joan has found that Jeffries is actually an outlaw, and not the real Jeffries at all. She manages to dispatch a pigeon to the cave with another message: "Jeffries is sending us away by coach this afternoon. J."

Jeffries is actually planning to get rid of Joan permanently, when he realizes she knows of his outlaw past. The Lone Ranger intercepts the coach but, in the battle with Jeffries' men, it breaks loose from its horses and plunges over a cliff.

Chapter Thirteen The Fatal Plunge

The Lone Ranger and Joan manage to jump free of the coach before it is lost. They go to the cave where her father and young Sammy have also joined the thinning ranks. In the process, they capture Felton and bring him along, tying him with rawhide bonds.

As the cave dwellers plan their next move against the fake Jeffries, Felton finds a bucket of water and stretches his bonds by dipping them in it. Once free, he arms himself and climbs to a cave wall where he can cover all the occupants. He doesn't see Dick, who is momentarily out of his field of vision.

Earlier, Dick has had some interesting conversation with young Sammy. "I'll bet you're the Lone Ranger!" Sammy says suddenly. "That might be a good guess, Sammy," Dick replies cheerfully.

Dick manages to climb even higher than Felton without being seen. Once above the gunman, he dives down at him. Both fall a long way to the cave floor.

Chapter Fourteen Messenger of Doom

Felton is killed in the fall, and Dick sustains a back injury. While the others are caring for him, a pigeon arrives -- without a message, and not one sent by Joan who is with the group in the cave. They realize it must mean Jeffries' men have learned of the pigeon messages, and have released one to follow it to their secret hideaway.

Allen and Bert leave with Tonto to investigate and see if Jeffries' men have followed. Dick stays behind with Joan, Blanchard and Sammy, and realizes that the enemy is indeed entering the cave. Sending the other to safety, Dick meets Kestner and the other troopers with a torch held near a keg of gunpowder, and threatens to set it off if they come closer. One of the troopers manages to knock the torch away from Dick, and a gunfight breaks out. Dick fans his pistols at the stalagmite-laden rooftop, knocking loose the sharpened rocks and causing the roof to give way. The Lone Ranger shows up to add his firepower to Dick's, but the falling debris from above covers them all.

Last Chapter The Last of the Rangers

The Lone Ranger manages to protect himself beneath a ledge, but Dick is not so fortunate. He is killed, sacrificing himself to take some of the enemy with him and save the Blanchards and Sammy from them.

The masked man uncovers Dick's body, and touches his hand to his hat in a kind of farewell salute. "Dick Forrest," he says, "hail and farewell . . . and welcome home."

Now there are three graves in the cave, marked by wooden crosses. Allen and Bert, along with Joan, Blanchard and Sammy, stand momentarily with bowed heads before moving out to join Holt (Fred Burns) and other ranchers who have been organized to fight against Jeffries' minions.

But Jeffries now knows the location of the cave, and his men have surrounded the entrance before anyone can escape. The occupants of the cave hold Jeffries -- or Smith -- and his men at bay with heavy gunfire, but know their ammunition must run out sooner or later.

Bert and Allen prepare to make a dash for it, planning to ride out in different directions in the hope one of them can reach the ranchers and bring help.

Shaking hands one last time, the two surviving Texans mount their similar-looking black horses and ride for it. Behind them, Silver unties his own reins from a hitching post in the cave and joins in the flight through Jeffries' lines.

Both Texans are chased by Jeffries' men. One appears to be hit, and falls from his saddle into a clump of bushes. The other slumps forward on his horse as though hit by a rain of bullets. But back at the scene where the first one was unhorsed, he reappears -- still unidentifiable as to being Allen or Bert -- does a running mount onto Silver who has followed his trail. Having donned his mask and Lone Ranger guns by the time he reaches Holt's camp, he rallies the ranchers and gathers more help on the way during the ride back to the cave.

At the cave, the outlaws set brush fires to smoke out the defenders. Tonto and the others are near to being overcome, when the ranchers arrive in a hail of gunfire. Mounting White Fella (Tonto's horse had not yet been re-named Scout), he rides through the fumes to join his masked companion in chasing down the pseudo-Jeffries and his few remaining cohorts.

"They can only get at us one at a time here," Jeffries tells his remaining trooper as they take cover. "At any rate, I'm going to settle with the Lone Ranger." But the masked man has circled around behind them, while Tonto

has kept them busy with gunfire, and drops down on the pair. He knocks the trooper out quickly, then grapples with Jeffries at the cliff's edge. (A similar fight would be re-created on the 20th anniversary Lone Ranger radio show, which marked a re-match between the masked man and Butch Cavendish, and where Cavendish is finally killed in a fall from the cliff. It was the 3, 128th broadcast and was heard in 1953.) In the serial battle, both the Lone Ranger and his arch-enemy roll over the cliff's edge together.

Later, now with four graves in the cave, Blanchard and other dignitaries – joined by Tonto, Joan and young Sammy – pay tribute to the fallen Texans. "It is only fitting, therefore, that he be buried her beside his three comrades who, in their turn, laid down their lives that Texas might be freed of tyranny," Blanchard says. "The debt of gratitude owed to them by the people of Texas can never be repaid. They will always live in our memories." The audience does not know yet whether Allen or Bert occupy that fourth grave.

"And to him who was known as the Lone Ranger," Blanchard continues, "our hearts go out. He, like his comrades, laid down his life. Through and because of his leadership, it is our privilege to gather here once more a free people. And as your newly-appointed governor, I make this my first official act – that this, their home, shall be forever set aside as a monument to their patriotism and their daring."

But then, in the distance, there is a distant call of "Hi-yo, Silver." As the group in the cave listens, it comes a second time. "It's him!" Tonto says. "The Lone Ranger," adds Joan. "I knew he wasn't dead," says Sammy.

Riding into the cave astride Silver, the Lone Ranger is asked by Blanchard to stay on and help reorganize the Texas Rangers. "The Texas Rangers will be reorganized and Texas will enjoy freedom and

prosperity," the masked man replies. "But, in other places, men like Jeffries still prey on innocent people. With so much work to be done, I cannot remain. However, if Texas ever needs me, I will return."

Joan asks if the Lone Ranger will remove his mask, and let them see who he really is. He does so, standing revealed as Allen King. Then, with a wave of farewell, he – still maskless – and Tonto ride away from the smiling Joan, Blanchard and Sammy, toward the horizon in what was to become the traditional closing of every Lone Ranger comic, movie, TV show and radio program, with a "Hi-yo, Silver . . . away!"

Afterword

THE LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN should have been an even better serial. The Republic team had improved its stuntwork, fight sequences and other serial work. But it is this first Lone Ranger serial, with its unique gimmick of trying to guess the hero's identity rather than that of a villain, which stick in the minds of people who saw it as something unique and special.

The idea would be used only once more, by Republic in 1943 in a serial titled **THE MASKED MARVEL**. The title role was actually played by stuntman Tom Steele, with his voice dubbed by Gayne Whitman as Billy Bletcher had done for the Lone Ranger. In this story, there are four insurance agents – Jim Arnold (played by Rod Bacon), Frank Jeffers (Richard Clarke), Bob Barton (David Bacon, no relation to Rod) and Terry Morton (Bill Healy), who combat the World War II sabotage schemes of a Japanese spy, Mura Sakima (Johnny Arthur). The agents, who all wear identical suits and hats, are aided by a masked figure who dresses the same way – obviously one of the four, but which one? Jim is killed first, just as was Jim Clark among the Lone Ranger quintet – then Frank dies radioing a warning to his friends of an impending Samkima scheme he has uncov-

ered. Terry and Bob survive to the end, with the Masked Marvel unmasking only to leading lady Louise Currie and revealing himself as Bob. For more details see the next issue of **Cliffhanger** where the Masked Marvel will be featured.

One more coincidence – although radio's Lone Ranger is supposed to be named Reid, he turned out in the first serial to be named Allen King. (His name was inexplicably changed in the second.) In 1953, when Clayton Moore was taking a season off from being television's Lone Ranger, he starred in a Republic serial . . . as Alan King. His companion, played by Johnny Spencer, was named Bert Hadley – the same first name as Bert Rogers, the last surviving Texan besides Allen.

Lee Powell and Herman Brix – Allen and Bert in the Lone Ranger serial – were co-starred immediately in Republic's next serial, **THE FIGHTING DEVIL DOGS**, in which they faced innumerable perils as Marines fighting a villain known as The Lightning. And this time, both men were allowed to live through the serial and finish their adversary together. –PD.

Serial News

Action Packed Cliffhangers, the popular PBS series from South Carolina Educational TV is in the preparation stages of a second series of serials.

Burn 'Em Barnes, The Lost Jungle, The Devil Horse and Zorro's Fighting Legion will make up the 26 week package with two serial taking up six weeks and two going for seven weeks. Contact your local PBS station or South Carolina Educational TV for more details.

Bill Black's AmeriComics has a new comic out featuring Nyoka which is to be distributed by B&W Promotions. See your local dealer.

A Tribute to Robert Livingston

by Bobby J. Copeland

The last of The Three Mesquiteers is gone. Robert Livingston, who appeared in 29 of the 53 Mesquiteer films, passed away on March 7, 1988. Although several actors starred in the leading roles of the series, the best known trio was Ray "Crash" Corrigan, Max "Lullaby" Terhune and Robert "Stony" Livingston. Livingston was preceded in death by Terhune who died on June 5, 1973, and



Robert Livingston autographs a photo for the author at the Atlanta Film Caravan in 1985. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

Corrigan who passed away on August 10, 1976.

Robert Livingston was born Robert Edgar Randall in Quincy, Illinois. His parents, both newspaper writers, were Edgar O. and Lillian Langdon Randall. The family moved to Glendale, California when Livingston was twelve years old. Although biographies list his birth date as December 9, 1908, his son Addison reported at the time of his father's death that Livingston was 83. (Livingston's obituary

notice stated that he was 83, but still listed his birth at 1908.)

Universal studios signed Livingston to a movie contract in 1929. He later worked for MGM, but it wasn't until he joined Republic Pictures that he received star recognition. He starred in Republic's first color production, **The Bold Caballero**. Although, he was one of the best looking western stars, he played several roles requiring him to wear a mask. In fact, Livingston played more masked

characters than any other Hollywood personality.

Livingston first appeared in the Mesquiteer series in the 1936 film called appropriately enough, **The Three Mesquiteers**. He played a character called Stony Brooke. Ray Corrigan played Tucson Smith and Syd Saylor played Lullaby Joslin. Saylor was dropped after the first film and Max Terhune was brought in for the Lullaby role. Livingston was in and out of the series from 1937 through 1941. He



Sammy McKim, Max Terhune, Ray Corrigan and Robert Livingston in one of the early very popular Three Mesquiteers series for Republic. (Courtesy of Don Creacy.)

took a break in 1939 to play one of his best known roles, that of The Lone Ranger in a 15-chapter Republic serial entitled **The Lone Ranger Rides Again**. Each time he rejoined the Mesquiteer series, he assumed the role of Stony Brooke. Livingston's final film in the series was the 1941 entry, **Gangs of Sonora**. Tom Tyler was then cast in the role of Stony Brooke and Tyler continued to play the part until the series terminated in 1943.

The Three Mesquiteers' films were probably the most popular of all the trio movies. The series appeared seven times on the list of the Top Ten Money-Making Western Stars poll. Other studios copied the series and produced such trios as The Range Busters, The Trail Blazers, The

Rough Riders, and The Texas Rangers.

After the Mesquiteer films, Livingston signed with PRC and appeared with "Fuzzy" St. John in The Lone Rider series. He later returned to Republic and teamed up with cowboy comic Smiley Burnette for a short-lived series. Livingston continued in movies for a number of years, but usually played the heavy in films starring other cowboy stars.

Livingston's brother, Addison "Jack" Randall, was also a B-western performer. At the time, Gene Autry had become a big hit as a singing cowboy, Monogram cast Randall in that role, but he proved to be no match for Autry. Randall died in 1945 while filming at the famous Iverson Ranch.

Harold Smith, western film festival promoter and author of one of the best selling books on B-westerns, Saturdays Forever, was able to persuade Livingston to attend the 1985 Atlanta Film Caravan. This was a rare public appearance for him and it took him a while to warm up to the fans. At the banquet, held at the conclusion of the festival, Livingston expressed his appreciation to the fans and told them that he now knew the meaning of Southern hospitality. His last personal appearance was at the Golden Boot Awards, held in Los Angeles in August, 1987. He appeared in a wheel chair to accept his award. His son Addison, from Livingston's marriage to producer Hal Roach's daughter Margaret, accompanied Livingston on all his travels



Robert Livingston seems to be waving farewell to all his fans in this publicity photo. Good-bye old friend, you'll live in our memories, forever. (WOY Collection.)

during the past few years.

Livingston's cowboy movies, like all B-western films, were popular with a segment of the population due to their good moral tone. This is the reason

that B-western buffs were so disappointed when Livingston came out of retirement in the 70's to appear in three pornographic films, **Girls For Rent**, **Naughty Stewardess**, and

Blazing Stewardess.

Although Robert Livingston has left us, much of his contribution to the B-western era remains intact for the future enjoyment of his many fans.-BC



Sammy McKim in a publicity photo for the 1939 Columbia serial **FLYING G-MEN**. (Courtesy of Don Creacy.)

The Sammy McKim Story

Movie Actor – War Hero – Artist

by Don Creacy

The name Sammy McKim brings to mind the days of long ago when the Saturday matinee was the highlight of the week and a disaster if we could not find enough pop bottles to sell (2¢ each) in order to earn the ten cents admission fee to the local theater. Usually when a juvenile appeared in one of our movies you would hear a loud groan all over the theater and some very descriptive statements from the older boys. Not so with Sammy McKim.

Boys growing up during the depression did not go to the barber shop very often so we understood Sammy needing a hair cut, and having freckles was a fact of life. Actually we envied Sammy--he got to ride horses all over the countryside and none of us had a sister like Phyllis Isley (Jennifer Jones) to hug and care for us.

Sammy was born in North Vancouver, Canada on December 20, 1924. He had two brothers and two sisters. All appeared in films at one time or another. The McKim family moved to Seattle, Washington when Sammy started to school. With the father in ill health the McKims moved in 1935 to Los Angeles for a warmer climate. While visiting a cousin Sammy got into pictures.

"My grandfather and I went to see this cousin. A neighbor told us he was at work at MGM. In those days it was no problem to get into a studio like it is today. While we were visiting, a member of the casting office came in, looked at me with that big mop of hair and a million and one



Even when Sammy was starring in movies he was perfecting his talents as an artist in his spare time. Here at twelve he sketches Max Terhune during a break in filming on a *Three Mesquiteers* film in 1937

freckles and said I would be a good type for the movies. He typed up a letter of introduction to the children's division of Central Casting. I started to work as an extra, my first movie was in a Jane Withers movie, **This Is The Life**. The pay for an extra was five dollars a day, but I had a couple of lines so I got ten dollars a day, and during the depression ten dollars a day was not bad pay, even for a grown man.

During the next months Sammy did bit parts at most of the studios and had interviews with different producers and casting directors in hopes that they would remember him when a juvenile part came along. This led to Sammy working at Republic Studios. "My first picture at Republic was **Country**

Gentlemen with Olson and Johnson. Ray Corrigan had a small part in this and later I got to know him quite well doing the *Three Mesquiteers* pictures. As a result of this film I was asked to be in my first Mesquiteer, **Hit the Saddle**. Rita Hayworth was in that picture. She was then known as Rita Cansino...a nice gal. I recently saw this film and remembered that my horse was rather slow."

After a couple of Mesquiteer pictures and the serial **Painted Stallion** in which Sammy received third billing after Ray Corrigan and Hoot Gibson, Republic Studios signed Sammy to a five year contract at fifty dollars a week, and every six months a twenty five dollar increase. Sammy made several more pictures and was getting a



Sammy in first film for Republic watches from the back seat as Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson get a warning from the law in this scene from **COUNTRY GENTLEMEN**. (Courtesy of Don Creacy.)

publicity build-up.

"I had picture layouts with Leo Carrillo, Gene Autry and other studio personalities, product tie-ins with Tootsie Roll, Daisy B. B. Guns, Schwinn Bicycles and Mickey Mouse watches...Little did I know that I would work for Walt Disney later. I did not get a nickel out of those endorsements. The studio made the profit.

"Republic was a friendly studio to work for, great people all the way around, but it was common knowledge that it was a cheap studio. We made those westerns in five to eight days...All the studios did, and some took less time than we did. Kids were not to work over eight hours a day, which includ-

ed three hours for schooling. There were several times we worked over eight hours a day, six days a week.

"I remember on one of the Mesquiteer pictures it was the last day for filming and the unit manager talked to my grandfather and told him my eight hours were up, but we had a couple of scenes to be filmed. He asked if we would leave the studio with my teacher (who was a marvelous teacher, by the way)...We would say goodbye and my grandfather and I would get in our car and drive around the block to the alley that ran behind the studio. The unit manager let us in and I worked for about two more hours and we finished the film. This went

on all the time and it was not unusual. It was expected of you...You kept your stock up with the people that hired you." When Sammy was making movies he was accompanied by his grandfather, a Welshman who did not take anything from anybody at any time. He was a good-hearted and moral person who was concerned about Sammy's future. Republic had assigned one of its writers, Betty Burbridge, to write a series of westerns starring Sammy. His contract had just two weeks to go before it would expire and if his option was picked up he would get a twenty five dollar a week raise. One of the studio officials talked to Sammy's grandfather and said the studio wanted



1935, on the set of Warner Bros. **THE GREAT O'MALLEY**. Pat O'Brien compliments Sammy McKim on the caricature Sammy did of Pat. Pat later autographed it for Sammy. (Courtesy of Sammy McKim.)

to write a new contract for Sammy but at the pay he had been working for. The reason for not getting the raise was that the studio was having a bad time financially; some pictures had not done well at the box office.

Sammy's grandfather refused the delay in the pay increase and Republic dropped the proposed series of westerns starring Sammy. Naturally, this was a big disappointment to Sammy and the McKim family. However, in a few months Sammy was back at Republic working for one hundred and twenty five dollars a week. There were no hard feelings. It was just a business deal that did not go through.

Sammy was usually credited as

being about two years younger than he was. He was small for his age and looked younger. In **The Lone Ranger** (1938) pressbook Sammy is billed as a ten year old when actually he was thirteen years old.

"It was amazing, sometimes, what would be in a press release the studio put out. People that did not even know you would write things about you that were not actually lies, but kind of 'reshaped the truth'. Now the press release from **The Lone Ranger** about my sketching on the set is true. I've been sketching since I can remember.

"In **The Great O'Malley** (Warner Brothers, 1935) I had a bit part. I was sketching on the set and Pat O'Brien saw the

sketch. He called for the publicity man and still photographer over to take a picture for publicity. In the Warner picture **Frisco Kid** with Jimmy Cagney I was an extra. Cagney noticed my sketching and in-between scenes we got acquainted and he took a shine to me. He invited me into his dressing room and signed my sketch and did a couple of caricatures of himself. He told me he wanted to be an artist when he was a young fellow but instead became an actor. Of course, in his later years he did a lot of painting...And he was good at it."

Sammy and his brothers were brought up firmly. They were not supposed to be wise guys on



On location in 1937 near Los Angeles for the Columbia serial **THE GREAT ADVENTURES OF WILD BILL HICKOK**. Bill Elliott shows Sammy McKim a few highlights from his Geography book. School teacher Mr. Clark (later an MGM assistant director) looks on approvingly. Sammy's older brother, David, is at the picture's far right. (Courtesy of Sammy McKim.)

the set. Some kids had the reputation for cutting up and causing problems."I know of one big western star that had this kid in a picture and the kid was a big mouth, a real pain. This western star just hated that kid. There were some people that did not take to kids. That reminds me of a story about Ward Bond.

"I played the part of the Runt in the Columbia picture **The Reformatory**. Bond played a guard. Joe Walters, the still cameraman, called Ward and me over so he could take some publicity pictures. Joe told Ward to grab me like he's threatening me. Well, Ward grabbed my shirt front with one hand and my face with the other and bounced

me up against the wall of the set...He was kinda rough!...Just walked away."

"Hoot Gibson in the **Painted Stallion** was distant, but the people in the Mesquiteer series were mighty friendly. I do remember an incident with Hoot Gibson. We were on a wagon train outside of St. George, Utah where we shot the outdoor scenes for the **Painted Stallion** over a two week period. Ray Corrigan, Hoot Gibson, Hal Taliaferro, Jack Perrin and I were out front leading the wagon train when the reins on the lead team broke. The four-horse team started picking up speed and the other people out front got out of the way but I got caught between

the two lead horses. My short-legged pony began to run, but he was not very fast! I saw the horses' heads coming up on each side and I knew that wagon tongue would trip us up and my pony and I would be run over pretty quick! Well, Hoot Gibson spurred his big roan horse in and pulled that team up...He was really a horseman and, as they say, 'he saved my bacon'...I sincerely thanked him for it!"

The biggest problem for a juvenile actor? "To keep working. On small budget pictures most people got along fairly well. If I had a day or two's work I could usually establish some rapport with the director and the people I worked with.



A publicity photo for the 1937 Republic Three Mesquiteer film **TRIGGER TRIO** showing Ralph Byrd, Sandra Corday, Ray "Crash" Corrigan and Sammy McKim. (Courtesy of Don Creacy.)

On some of the big pictures this was not easy sometimes. Some of the stars were concerned or occupied with their roles and did not bother with other people that only had a line or two. However, some were very considerate and helpful. Suggestions on how to do a scene came mainly from the director and sometimes from old pro's like Jimmy Gleason. In some of the B-westerns we were so short of time that you would not have time to rehearse a scene."

Sammy never had any serious accidents but one day while standing in the saddle spinning a rope, the rope clipped the horse's ears and Sammy landed his head on the ground! That's one way of "seeing stars" on the

set.

If any scene was dangerous the studio hired adults to double for the kids. Sometimes they would hire dwarfs and there were also some small-sized adults that doubled for kids. Their costume as a rule was furnished by the studio. However, on some westerns Sammy used his own clothing. On pictures like the **Painted Stallion** he did not have any buckskins so the studio had several outfits made up for him. If the studio did not have what was needed in the wardrobe department the actors would be sent over to Western Costumers...The 'Western' in the company's name didn't refer only to 'horse operas', for they serviced all the studios, period to

contemporary wardrobe!

In school Sammy did so well that he jumped ahead one year. The state had what they called a welfare worker (actually, a school teacher) on the set every day they filmed whether it was Saturday, a regular day or vacation period. Three hours of that eight hours had to be away from the camera on studies or recreation.

Sammy graduated from Hollywood High School. "I remember one semester I was only in school for ten days. The rest of the time I was out working some place" (with a teacher on the set).

Sammy's father died of a heart attack when Sammy was about fourteen, and the father role was



On the set of John Ford's **THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS** in 1936 for RKO Studios. Preston Foster showing Sammy McKim how to 'line up the sights.' Sammy also worked with Preston in **ANNIE OAKLEY** at RKO. Barbara Stanwyck co-starred in both films. (Courtesy of Sammy McKim.)



Sammy McKim points something out to Phyllis Isley (later Jennifer Jones) and Eddy Waller in this scene from Republic's 1939 **NEW FRONTIER**. (Courtesy of Don Creacy.)

filled by Sammy's grandfather. With Sammy and his brothers and sisters working in the movies the McKim family was able to pay the rent and put groceries on the table during the difficult thirties.

How would Sammy prepare for the next day? "When I was finished with a day's shooting I would go home, take a shower, have dinner and then take the script and curl up in a corner and go over the next day's shooting. Usually they would give us what they called a daily sheet at the end of a day's work. The daily was for the next day and told you what scenes were to be filmed. So I would look up those scenes and study my lines. Fan mail was taken care of by

me and my grandfather at home."

"Sometimes you react to incidents that happen, one way when you are a child and a different way when you are an adult. I was at MGM on the set of **San Francisco** with Spencer Tracy who was playing a priest in the film. They had cables running around all over the floor and this scene was in the chapel. I was one of several kids that were to sing in the chapel choir-loft with Jeanette MacDonald. Tracy was by himself, walking back and forth in a corner of the sound stage going over his lines. I could see his lips moving and he would stop and gaze up at the ceiling, repeating his lines. He was

dressed in a priest's garments and he tripped over one of those cables and almost took a header. Now I knew he was an actor, but when he said, "God d-- it!" that shocked me--a priest using language like that! When I was working on the Mesquiteers pictures Ray Corrigan and Bob Livingston got along fine when I was around. I never saw any of the friction that some people have said existed.

"Max Terhune would spend some time with me often, talking to me through Elmer (the dummy). I recall in one film, **Heart of the Rockies**, I had fallen over a cliff and Bob and Ray lowered Max over the cliff to help me. I was holding on to this baby wildcat which was scrat-



Robert Livingston is explaining that Ray Corrigan, Max Terhune and he have just rescued Sammy McKim in this scene from **HEART OF THE ROCKIES** (1937, Republic). Note the gloves on Max's hands holding the wildcat. (Courtesy of Don Creacy.)

ching me. Out on location I had fallen into a net, then at the studio the scene was shot in front of a process-screen. In the course of being pulled up Max put his hand on top of mine on the rope, and for a short time Max's weight was on top of my hand. I let out a holler and Max knew what had happened, but he had to get his feet around to brace himself and get a new hold on the rope. I think after my hand quit hurting Max felt worse than I did! Max was a kind, pleasant, soft-hearted person."

Other remembrances of Sammy and people he worked with..."Yakima Canutt was a good guy. I worked in several films with him. In fact, he

doubled for me in **Painted Stallion**. I could swim a bit but I had never swum a horse, so Yak put on a set of buckskins and pulled my hat down around his ears so that only his head and hat were out of the water. Ray (Corrigan) was closer to the camera and Yak was on the far side. So Yakima Canutt, all-time stunt man, doubled for twelve year old under-sized Sammy McKim!"

"Joe Kane was a nice person to work with. One time he told my grandfather that 'Sammy is a great little actor. All I have to do is wave my script at him and he has all the lines down pat.'

"William Witney referred to me as his 'first actor'. On **Painted**

Stallion the studio put Witney in on a temporary basis to direct some scenes and he did some good work which was his first experience. I met Witney years later at the Disney studio when he was assigned to direct a few 'Zorro' TV episodes . . . Naturally, we talked over 'old times'."

"I did two Autry movies. Gene was a quiet but likeable guy, not aggressive. We got along fine on the set. Smiley Burnette was more extroverted in his own manner, always full of fun."

"When I did the picture **Night Riders**, John Wayne had become one of the Mesquiteers. He was on the quiet side on the set but always friendly. A



Sammy McKim did two pictures with Gene Autry. Above is a scene from one of them, probably **ROVIN' TUMBLEWEEDS** (1939, Republic). (Courtesy of Don Creacy.)

pleasant fellow. I think this is the film where I jumped up and hit John Wayne in the chin for shoving my sister around. We rehearsed this scene a couple of times and then we filmed the scene. I swung and just missed Wayne's jaw and he snapped his head back. Years later when we watched this movie on TV my oldest boy said, 'Dad, not many guys can hit John Wayne in the jaw like you did and get away with it.' I remember we were working at Iverson's Ranch in September and it was 117 in the shade! I made three westerns with Wayne, in all."

"My younger brother Harry had a bit-part in the Columbia picture **Western Caravans**. I had the juvenile lead. Charles

Starrett was a very nice person and we all got along well. Sam Nelson was the director and a fine gentleman. I worked quite a bit at Columbia but I think I preferred working at Republic."

"George Sherman, a director I worked for quite a bit, was a great little guy. They always referred to him as 'the little man with the big cigar'.

"In **Rocky Mountain Rangers** I was killed. They let me have a death scene on-screen. We rehearsed the scene a few times before filming it...I also had to practice with the bull whip a few times for that same scene. Raymond Hatton was in this film...He was a great actor, was all-business on the set.

"The exteriors of **Painted**

Stallion were done at St. George, Utah. The studio sent us to location in a limousine and we stayed at a motor court (what they call a motel now). I found serials interesting. They kept two directors going, shooting concurrently. Sometimes they would have a car stand by to run you from one unit to another unit to do the next scene. Usually I did not need any make-up, but on the first day of filming the director looked at me and said, 'You're too pale, go see the make-up man.' The make-up man was not available so they just took some of that red Utah dirt and rubbed it on my face, which gave me a 'dirty look' in my first few scenes!"

"We did **Heart of the**



Sam McKim in 1966 shows one of two paintings he did for the permanent collection of the U.S. Air Force titled: On the scene of "Operation Desert Strike," joint USAF-Army exercise in the Mojave Desert. In the background is Sam's continuity sketches for the Disney film **THE GNOME-MOBILE**, released in 1967. (Courtesy of Sammy McKim.)

Rockies at Idylwild, above Palm Springs. The company stayed at the lodge and in the evening different people would spin 'tall tales.' Jack Kirk would get up and sing...had a pretty good voice. On another Mesquiteer film Jack was doubling for Max Terhune. He was tearing across the landscape and was to be shot and fall from the galloping horse in this long shot. When Jack took the fall he knocked the breath out of himself. The first-aid person who was always called Doc took Jack behind a rock to revive him with a fifth of whiskey. Jack's co-workers kidded him by asking him how many nips he got out of the bottle. Jack asked, 'What

bottle?' (Doc had used the bottle for himself!)

"On the Lone Ranger serial I did not have to try out for my part...I was called in and given the script. Of the fifteen chapters I was in the last five, I think. Most of the chapters that I was in were filmed at Iverson's Ranch and Red Rock Canyon. "Lee Powell was a quiet sort of fellow, not extroverted, but friendly, and I liked him very much. It was sad that his life ended as a fighting Marine during W.W. II."

"George Letz (Montgomery) was a naturally friendly fellow. We became good friends. He gave me a pair of steel and silver spurs he had made, but during a

move from one house to another the spurs were lost! He was, and is, quite a sculptor...a fine artist."

"Lane Chandler was a pleasant person. I was not close to him but he was always nice to me on the set."

"Hal Taliaferro was an old friend. We had worked together in a number of films. He was a great guy! Bruce Bennett was quiet and effective in his role on this film. I saw several chapters of this serial when it was released. I was called by the studio several times to do personal appearances in downtown theaters in Los Angeles. I can still remember one scene in this serial where I shot at Hal



A drawing Sammy did for all of our Cliffhanger readers. Thanks Sammy for your co-operation in doing this article.

Taliaferro because I thought he was responsible for shooting my grandfather. He apprehended me and as I explained what happened, the tears flowed. I had a knack for doing this...I 'cried' in various scenes in at least four different films."

"In the **Great Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok** Frankie Darro played an Indian lad. He was over eighteen at the time but played much younger roles. Dickie Jones was also in this serial; he was two or three years younger than I. I had seen little of this film until the 1985 Memphis Film Festival. My wife and

I sat through the entire serial, one chapter after another...took about five hours! Most of my scenes were in and around the town of Abilene; most of Dickie Jones' scenes were on the wagon train. My older brother David, two years older than I, was one of the town kids. A number of us town kids helped Wild Bill...We even had badges that we wore. When I watched this serial there was so much that I just did not remember. Sometimes we were so busy we just went from one scene to another without much thought about what we were doing. The

exteriors were shot at Kanah, Utah. Bill Elliott was a well-liked guy, a gentleman..." "He found out that I was a stamp collector and he gave me a big bag of stamps that he had collected at one time. Bill's daughter and my wife knew each other in junior high school. I worked with Sam Nelson (director) mostly on this picture. I enjoyed working with him; he was good with kids. Some directors could not make the transition from working with adults to kids, but Nelson did not have that problem."

"All of the people in the serial



Two generations and three artists: Matt McKim, sculptor and Brian McKim, animator-illustrator with their dad Sam McKim, illustrator-designer. Oh, yes! Those are Sam's paintings in the background. (Courtesy of Sammy McKim.)

Flying G Men were good to work with: Lorna Gray, James Craig, Robert Paige and Robert Fiske. I remember in one sequence where Lorna Gray and I were kidnapped and left tied-up in the woods. This was actually right behind Warners Studio on Forest Lawn Drive. After these scenes were shot, later on during the day they discovered the area where we had been was covered with poison oak. Lorna was affected. Also the script girl, assistant director and others, but somehow it did not bother me at all! Most of the flying scenes were done with miniatures and they gave me one of the small planes after the film was completed."

"I had a small part in the serial **Dick Tracy's G Men**. George Cleveland was my grandfather and we ran this small gas station which was located on Iverson's Ranch. I was in one or two chapters but don't think I was listed in the credits...George was a fine char-

acter actor...We'd worked together in the Lone Ranger, too...Later his role as the Grandfather in 'Lassie' brought him TV renown."

Sammy continued to do parts in films until he was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943. Sammy and his older brother had tried to volunteer in 1942 but had been turned down as they were not U.S. citizens. Their parents started the paper-work to become citizens during the depression but lack of money for various processing fees had prevented them from finishing the task.

While serving in the Army both brothers gained their citizenship. While in the service Sammy went through O.C.S., did a tour in the Philippine Islands before being discharged a 1st Lt. of Infantry. Sammy was in the reserves and was called back into service during the Korean War...He had some hair-raising experiences during this time, more so than any he

had in the film world, including being shot down between friendly and enemy lines. He received several medals for bravery and valor and was lucky to come out of the war with hardly a scratch.

By now Sammy had become Sam. His first love was drawing. He went to Art Center School and Chouinard Art Institute, graduating with a Bachelor's degree. An offer for a part in the John Ford picture **The Long Gray Line** forced Sam to decide between acting and a career in art. The latter won out...Sam worked in the advertising and art departments at Fox and then moved to the Disney Studio. He worked on many projects at Disney for thirty-two years and retired at the end of January 1987.

Sam and his wife Dorothy have been married over thirty-two years. They have two sons, Brian who is in animation, and Matt who is into sculpture. Both boys were Eagle Scouts, and it looks like there will be two more artists in the McKim family.

Sam sums up his years in the movies: "I've always had a positive attitude. I enjoyed my movie-making days...I never felt I had a lost childhood. I had good times and I was lucky in that I was able to pursue a career in art and be successful at it."

At the time of his retirement Sam had this to say: "These have been happy and productive years and I will still be doing some work for Disney from time to time, but now I am ready to go fishing."

Catch a big one, Sam! -MDM

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Buster Crabbe

King of the Action Serial Aces

by Mario DeMarco

Way back during the late 1920's and 30's my favorite comic strip was entitled, "Buck Rogers." The title, I later learned, was derived from two popular movie heroes of that era - Buck Jones, who was one of the great western stars at Fox and later at Columbia Studio, and Will Rogers, the humorous cowboy who at that time had made it big in the movies. The originator of this science-fiction strip, which was first originated as pulp fiction and later as a comic strip, was named Phil Nowlan. What he did was adopt "Buck" from Buck Jones and "Rogers" from Will Rogers. In this great strip were a number of fantastic inventions such as the television, rocket gun, flying belt, rockets, and numerous other "far fetched" creations along with the fantastic trips to various planets and the moon - not realizing that some 50 years later all of these things would become a reality. The character, Buck Rogers, was from the twentieth century and wakes up five centuries later in the year 2415. Buck adapts quickly to the knowledge and rigors of his time period and soon becomes a "space hero."

Another comic strip that I enjoyed as well as millions of others was "Flash Gordon," the "brain child" of Alex Raymond, a brilliant young cartoonist who was associated with King Feature Syndicate and had worked on a number of other successful cartoons before he began inking his incredible "Flash Gordon" strip. This strip was inspired from the "Buck Rogers" strip originated some years before it.

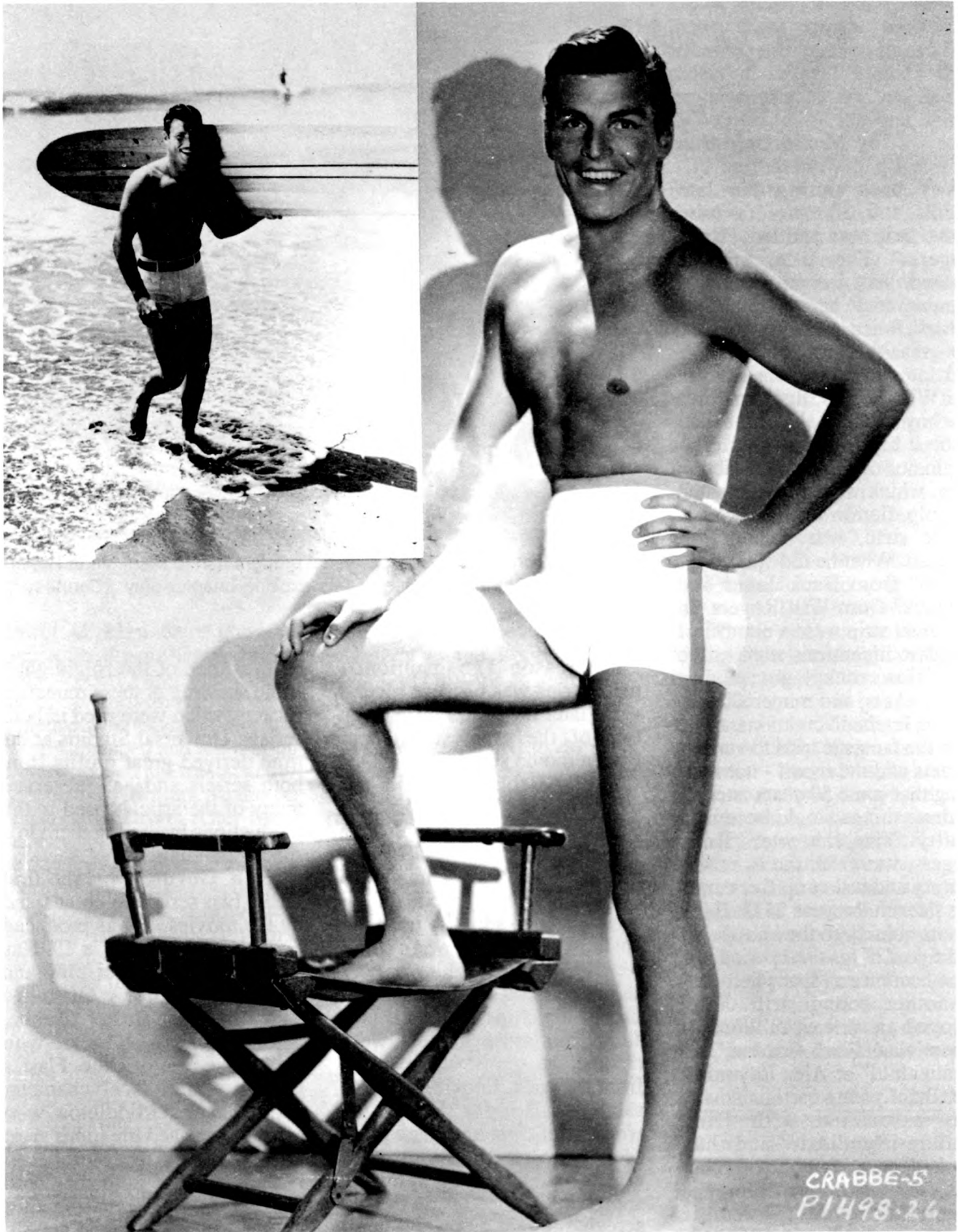


Buster's second "Flash Gordon" serial brought him to Mars. Jean Rogers again starred as the heroine in this exciting chapter-play. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

The reason I've mentioned these strips was because several years later they were scripted as two of the greatest science-fiction movie serials by a major studio. At this period in the movie making business "special effects" was just a young idea behind the camera lens, but the minds of the individuals who promoted "special wonders" in films began to adopt some of the "primitive" ideas when they were hired in the making of both serials. A good example was the use of air ships and rockets - small miniature models were created and smoke was released from the back. Looking at these same serials today through the wonders of cassettes, these same scenes are really "childish" in effects, but when they were first shown in the theaters on the big screen, the fans (mostly youngsters) were quite impressed with them. Today when fans are taken on tour through Universal

Studios, one of the "highlights" is the showing of these miniature rockets which were used in both serials. Universal Studios at the time derived great profits from both serials and has preserved many of the articles used in the productions by storing them in a special building.

Flash Gordon was the first of the two serials to be adapted by the movies. It was produced by Universal Studios in 1936 as a 13-episode chapter play and starred former Olympic swimming star Buster Crabbe, beautiful Jean Rogers who played the role of Dale, Flash's girlfriend, and "ace" character actor Charles Middleton who actually breathed life in his great role of "Ming the Merciless." It's amusing to note that both actors played and starred in a number of features and serials, but both are totally associated with the characters they portrayed in this particular serial



Not only a champion swimmer, Buster was excellent in the sport of surfing (see insert). An early publicity photo from Paramount in the 1930s. (Both courtesy of Author's collection.)

RED BARRY

BUSTER CRABBE
of "FLASH GORDON" FAME
as RED BARRY



A Lobby Card from 1937. Note they are already cashing in on the success of **Flash Gordon**. (Courtesy of Author's Collection.)

by the serial loving fans.

The **Flash Gordon** serial, needless to say, became a bit hit with the serial fans - one of the great factors of this thrilling chapter play besides the great cast of characters, was the special effects and various costumed "cartoon-like" individuals which were adapted from the strip itself. Some of these performers were molded into amazing inhabitants of several outer-space planets. The make-up department had their hands full and spent considerable time in the make-up and costume of the various outer-space characters associated

with the strip, which were faithfully reproduced for the serial.

The showing of the serial and its tremendous reception by the movie fans helped make Buster's name more prominent on the movie marquee signs. He was at the time loaned out from Paramount Studio and it is a bit disappointing to note that after the success of this serial, largely due by Crabbe's acting and athletic type maneuvers, Paramount went on to cast him in a number of their B productions where he was rated third or fourth on the list of characters. I believe that at this point had Buster been under contract to

Universal Studios, they would have starred him in better productions and more serials. It wasn't until 1938, after completing the **Flash Gordon** serial, that Universal decided to make a sequel to it which was entitled **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars**, which practically featured the same cast of star characters - the first being ably directed by Frederick Stephani, while the second was directed by veteran Ford Beebe and Robert Hill. Again, a variety of "futuristic" sets were constructed along with a new array of items which were adapted from the comic strip itself. By this time



A press flyer issued by Columbia Studios for Buster's last serial in 1952. It was directed by veteran director Spencer Bennett, who passed away in 1987 at the age of 93. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)



A Lobby Card from Buster's last serial in 1952. (Courtesy of Author's Collection.)

new methods in applying make-up and costume production had been created by the make-up and other special departments of the Universal Studios. This same studio, which had been the producers of **Dracula** and **Frankenstein**, had invented some spectacular work in creating these two "horror" personalities and had pushed forth to become the leaders in the production of horror films. The special departments used their skills in the production of Crabbe's second starring serial. When released and shown on the screen, the fans again packed the theaters and weren't disappointed in what they saw. The script writers did take some liberty in

creating some of their own characters other than that of the comic strip - as all movie studio script writers will do. The serial was a great financial success - so well, in fact, that Universal decided to condense the 15-episodes down to a mere 70 minutes and released it as a feature production, thus being able to reap movie profits from it.

Universal knew they had a "gold mine" in Buster Crabbe and they knew exactly how to promote his talents. Shortly after finishing the second "Flash Gordon" chapter-play, he was cast into the character role of another great comic strip character entitled, "Red Barry", which

had originated from the pen of Will Gould, one of the great corral of cartoonists under contract to King Feature Syndicate.

"Red Barry" was based on a rough and tough detective who knew his way in the underworld and was given the nickname of "Red" because of his flaming red hair. For his first serial Universal had dyed Buster's hair a light blonde to fit with the cartoon's character appearance - which Crabbe had measured to a "T". For the **Red Barry** role Crabbe's hair was changed to bright red, and here again, he closely resembled his cartoon character - in both facial character and physical appearance.

At one time Will Gould had



Universal's first great science-fiction serial **Flash Gordon**. Charles Middleton was exceptionally good as the villainous "Ming, the Merciless." Lovely Jean Rogers was ideal as heroine "Dale Arden." Buster of course had literally become "Flash Gordon." (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

become one of the finest sport cartoonists of the country and would have gone on producing these same type of cartoons, but at one time he was influenced by the great detective fiction writer, Dashiell Hammett, who was his idol, to produce a detective strip. Gould, in his career of sport cartooning, had become close friends with many sports celebrities and underworld characters. So, when he decided to draw his "Red Barry" strip he injected many of the characters into his works which he had personally known. In a short space of time, after appearing in the newspapers, "Red Barry"

quickly became a favorite of millions of readers throughout America and overseas. It became so popular that two major movie studios wanted to produce a feature starring the two-fisted cartoon detective. Problems with the syndicate held off the making of the feature and it finally ended when Universal managed to obtain the screen rights to the popular strip.

Crabbe again performed many physical and strenuous gags in each chapter-play. Being in top physical condition, due to his great athletic ability, he performed these difficult scenes with ease.

As I have previously stated the Buck Rogers comic strip had a great influence in creating his "Flash Gordon" strip by the young Alex Raymond. It wasn't until a year later that Universal decided to produce a serial based on the Buck Rogers strip. Instead of a 15 chapter-play, they produced it containing only 12 episodes. The previous Crabbe serials, other than the Barry one, contained many unique science-fiction gadgets - they saved considerable money by utilizing many of the same equipment and sets in their new chapter-play.

The following year, 1940, Universal decided to keep a



In *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars*, Buster, Jean Rogers, Frank Shannon and comic relief confront the "clay people." This was the second of three *Flash Gordon* serials Crabbe would star in. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

successful formula going - they scripted a new serial entitled, **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe**, again using the professional services of Charles Middleton portraying "Ming", and Frank Shannon as Flash's friend, with new feminine leads of Carol Hughes and Anne Gwynne. This would be the last of the science-fiction adventure serials for the handsome, athletic Crabbe - he later settled into a series of "B" westerns for the lowly P.R.C. studios, playing the role of "Billy the Kid" - a role that Bob Steele had vacated previously.

Glancing at some of the very early publicity photos that Universal had made of Crabbe

when he was starring in his very first chapter-play, it is quite amazing that he looked the "spitting image" of the heroic cartoon character that Alex Raymond had crated. The only difference was in physical appearance - Crabbe's hair was dyed a light blonde to match his cartoon image.

One of my writer-illustrator friends came up with a clever bit of deduction related to Crabbe - he remarked to me as to how an energetic, athletic individual such as Clarence Linden ever retained such a name as "Crabbe." With the slowness it implies, although it is associated with "water action", and that is what Buster specialized in.

I really never had the pleasure of meeting this great star athlete in person, but I did manage to correspond and converse with him via the phone. In fact, the last conversation I had with Buster was a week before he passed away. He stated he had a very bad cold and begged off my interview for a future date.

I first got in touch with him when I was preparing my "Battlin' Bob, Bob Steele" publication some years ago. The first letter I sent to him inquired about information on Steele's western series at Producers Releasing Corporation (P.R.C.). Since Buster was chosen as Bob's replacement in these "Billy the Kid" series, I assumed



After completing **Red Barry**, Crabbe became another comic strip hero in a serial, **Buck Rogers**. Here a tense scene with young Jackie Moran. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

he would be the person that could readily supply me with first- hand information on this star and his studio.

His letter was quite brief:

Dear Mario -

Bob Steele was a friend, actually a friend of everyone who knew him. And a much better actor than he was ever actually given credit - to wit - "Of Mice and Men" - really excellent!

I left Hollywood in 1951 and went east to New York to go to work on television. I had a contract for a two-year deal at WOR-TV, but I remained east for over 22 years - later moving to Arizona in June of '73. I really lost track of Hollywood

and really can't supply you with too much information on some of your questions.

His second letter in reference to the "Billy the Kid" series:

Dear Mario -

I will try to answer some of your questions. I really truly wasn't aware of the fact that Bob Steele made the "Billy the Kid" westerns. Sig Newfield was the producer and Sam Newfield (his brother) directed the 40-feature films Al St. John and I made for P.R.C. "Lash LaRue" later took over when I quit the series which was due to the lack of decent scripts, cuts in production costs, etc...It's an old story.

Believe it or not, we started the last "Billy" film I did on Monday

and wrapped it up and put it in the can on Thursday! The next day I quit. In your article you were kind enough to send me, I was then 66 - and now turned 73 this past month.

You asked what the production costs were for the average western feature I worked on - I really never knew what they were at P.R.C., I never inquired - I would guess somewhere about \$20,000 per feature. You might want to write to Sig Newfield, Jr., he has directed several of the new "Buck Rogers" television shows which starred Gil Gerard.

In regards to what the cost was to produce the earlier Buster Crabbe "Kid" series, he was



Jackie Moran and Buster as **Buck Rogers** have freed Philip Ahn from the villainous Wheeler Oakman on the ground and seem to be planning their next move. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

about correct, they averaged about \$23,000 each. The later ones did drop in production costs to about \$20,000 each. Breaking it down - Crabbe, as the star, received about \$3,000 and his side-kick St. John was paid \$1,000 - and about \$1,000 went to the cast. The remainder was paid to producer, director, cost of sets, travel, meals, etc. A typical shooting time schedule was about six days, but later the series were cut drastically to a mere four days to save expenses.

Crabbe's career in the movies could have gone into another direction. When Metro Goldwyn Mayer was screen testing many actors for the "Tarzan" role,

Buster was busy at Columbia Studios working on a "B" feature entitled, **That's My Boy**. The Metro crew did take a quick group test of some of the young players at this studio, Crabbe was included - but as Buster stated, some years later "This screen test was quite unfair because I never had the opportunity to really perform and show what I could do." Among some of the actors at M.G.M. that were also considered for the "Tarzan" role were Joel McCrea, Clark Gable, Charles Bickford and even then, football great Johnny Mack Brown, but these stars didn't meet with the studio's heads approval.

Tom Tyler was also tested - he

was pretty close, but would you believe the reason given for not being chosen was that he wasn't muscular enough! Tom, at the time, was the American Amateur Heavyweight Lifting Champion, lifting an unbelievable 760 pounds - a record which went unbroken on the record books for fourteen years! Previous to his signing as a western star for FBO, M.G.M. had used him as an extra in several features. Tom had a chance to display his wonderful torso to the film audience in their silent extravaganza feature, **Ben Hur**. The studio was interested in further using his services, but he had then signed with FBO. Years later Republic Studio had chosen



A Lobby Card from 1952. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

Tom to portray "Captain Marvel", one of the strongest characters in the world, for a chapter-play of the same title.

M.G.M. did sign up former Olympic swim star, Johnny Weismuller as Tarzan and he went on to become one of the studio's super stars.

Paramount Studios was eager to cash in on the success of the **Tarzan** film and reaped some of the high publicity M.G.M. had given the "Tarzan" character - they were also looking for someone to play the lead in their forthcoming production of **Tarzan the Fearless**. Not to wholly conflict with M.G.M.'s Tarzan, Paramount's script writers changed their character a

bit by portraying him as the "Lion Man", while Metro's Tarzan was billed as the "Ape Man" by the studio.

After months of screen testing various actors, Paramount narrowed the choice for the role to five individuals - Buster was one of them. Now, to get the opinion of the ordinary fan, you would imagine that the studio brass would invite fans from the outside and get their choice. The brass invited all of the secretaries from the various studio departments to attend the showing of the screen tests - when the votes were tallied it was a unanimous choice, all had voted for Crabbe!

In the years that Tarzan had been portrayed in books there

were very few individuals that could fit the description of the jungle lord. Judging from the very early illustrations of Tarzan in these books, about the only one that came close was the rugged silent star Elmo Lincoln - Johnny Weismuller and Buster Crabbe would completely change the Tarzan image to a more "streamlined" jungle lord.

There was one fault that Buster had to clear before he could go into film production in the Tarzan role - his voice was too high pitched. The studio solved this problem by assigning a voice teacher to him, and after a short time Buster was given out the proper grunts that the "jungle lord" would do. M.G.M. had



A 1952 Lobby Card from Buster's eighth starring serial. He was still in excellent shape and performed many of his own stunts. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

spent considerable expense for their **Tarzan** production, choosing the right characters, location, etc. - Paramount, on the other hand, figured that M.G.M. had highlighted the character of Tarzan to a point where they could spend less and still "reap the harvest" when they showed their production. As it turned out, the Paramount productions cut corners and it showed. Had the cast and crew chosen a more suitable location where the forest and vegetation resembled Africa, instead of shooting it entirely in the San Fernando area, they would have done better. When the film was shown on the big screen, it proved quite a synthetic

atmosphere for a wild, unexplored jungle.

Buster's ambition before he began getting film roles was to become a lawyer - and about this time he was seriously thinking of returning to college and resuming his law studies. Paramount sealed his dream forever when they offered Buster a brand new contract and immediately cast him in a series of top Zane Grey westerns where he co-starred with some of the other great outdoor stars of this studio.

It was Universal who would step into the scene and again change the course of Buster's career. They had bought the screen rights to several top notch

comic strips and cast him as the lead in a series of serials based on the popular strip heroes of the time, such as **Flash Gordon**, **Buck Rogers** and **Red Barry**. Had Paramount continued to cast him in top notch westerns rather than making money loaning him out to Universal, he surely would have went on to become one of Paramount's great action stars, or in the capacity of such other western heroes as Tim McCoy, Johnny Mack Brown, or Buck Jones, but we will never know.

Buster, as I mentioned previously, did manage to star in a series of westerns of his own, but it was in the twilight of his career and for the lowly Produc-



The Prince and the Clown of P.R.C., an unbeatable acting and action team! (Courtesy of Author's Collection.)

ers Releasing Corporation, who at the time were more interested in making a fast profit from these features than expanding into a quality studio such as Monogram or Republic who had come up the same way. These long series of westerns that Buster had starred for P.R.C. had never really benefited his screen career, but they did add him to a long list of western movie heroes.

After abruptly departing from P.R.C., Buster formed his own "Aqua Show" which he owned and operated in 1948 through 1950. He wasn't completely through with the movies - he would once again grace the small screens of thousands of house-

holds as the action star of the "Captain Gallant" television series. In this great outdoor series "Captain Gallant of the Foreign Legion" were actually shot on location in North Africa and later as hostilities became more evident in the area where they were filmed, the producers decided to shoot their remaining productions safely in Northern Italy. In these thrilling half hour productions, Buster's side-kick was veteran movie comic "Fuzzy" Knight and also included Crabbe's young son "Cuffy" who played a major role. The series began in 1955 and ended in 1963.

It is interesting to note that in two of his very first movie

appearances that he could not accept money for any of his athletic achievements outside of the amateur standing. At the time he was an amateur swimming champion and therefore did give his services in these two early films in lieu of money - he did accept gifts however. He first appeared in the M.G.M. movie **Good News** in 1930. In order to retain his amateur standing he did some stuntwork for "no fee", although he accepted gifts for his labor.

Buster performed in the 1932 Olympic Games where he had won the 400-meter event by breaking Johnny Weismuller's record (a world record by the way) of 4:52 by clipping four



Buster playing the role of an Indian in Paramount's **Desert Gold**. Tom Keene is cowboy and Marsha Hunt is admiring the horse. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

seconds off this time. He later broke his own record by swimming this event in the fast time of 4:38.

He was born Claren Linden Crabbe on February 7, 1909 in Oakland, California. How he actually became a star swimmer in later years was attributed to the fact that his family moved to Honolulu, Hawaii when he was a mere infant. He came into prominence while attending Puna Hou High School where he became a star athlete winning letters in four different sports - football, baseball, track and swimming. He later enrolled at the University of Hawaii and took sports where he had left off in high school - he added boxing

to his list of sports achievements and later captured the light heavyweight boxing championship of the Hawaiian Islands.

While still in his teens he returned to the States and enrolled in the University of Southern California where fame and fortune would soon be offered to him. It was his swimming power that won him a spot on the U.S. Swimming Team in the 1932 Olympics, which at the time were held in Los Angeles. In his very first attempt, Buster managed to win the 400-meter free-style and a year later he had improved so greatly that he had broken five world records, winning over 30 national championships in swimming and copping

16 international titles. Competing all over the globe, he accumulated hundreds of medals and trophies - because of the numerous records he had broken in swimming, the members of his team and his friends gave him the nickname of "Buster" - a fitting moniker to such a champion athlete.

The talent scouts at Paramount Studios took notice of the handsome athlete and gave him a role in a film which featured Charles Laughton, **Island of Lost Souls**. Sometime later when jungle films were popular, Paramount cast him as the star of **King of the Jungle**, and from then on it was a series of action and adventure films for their



Buster sporting a mustache in a scene from Paramount's **Swamp Fire**. The naval officer kissing the girl is none other than Johnny Weismuller. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

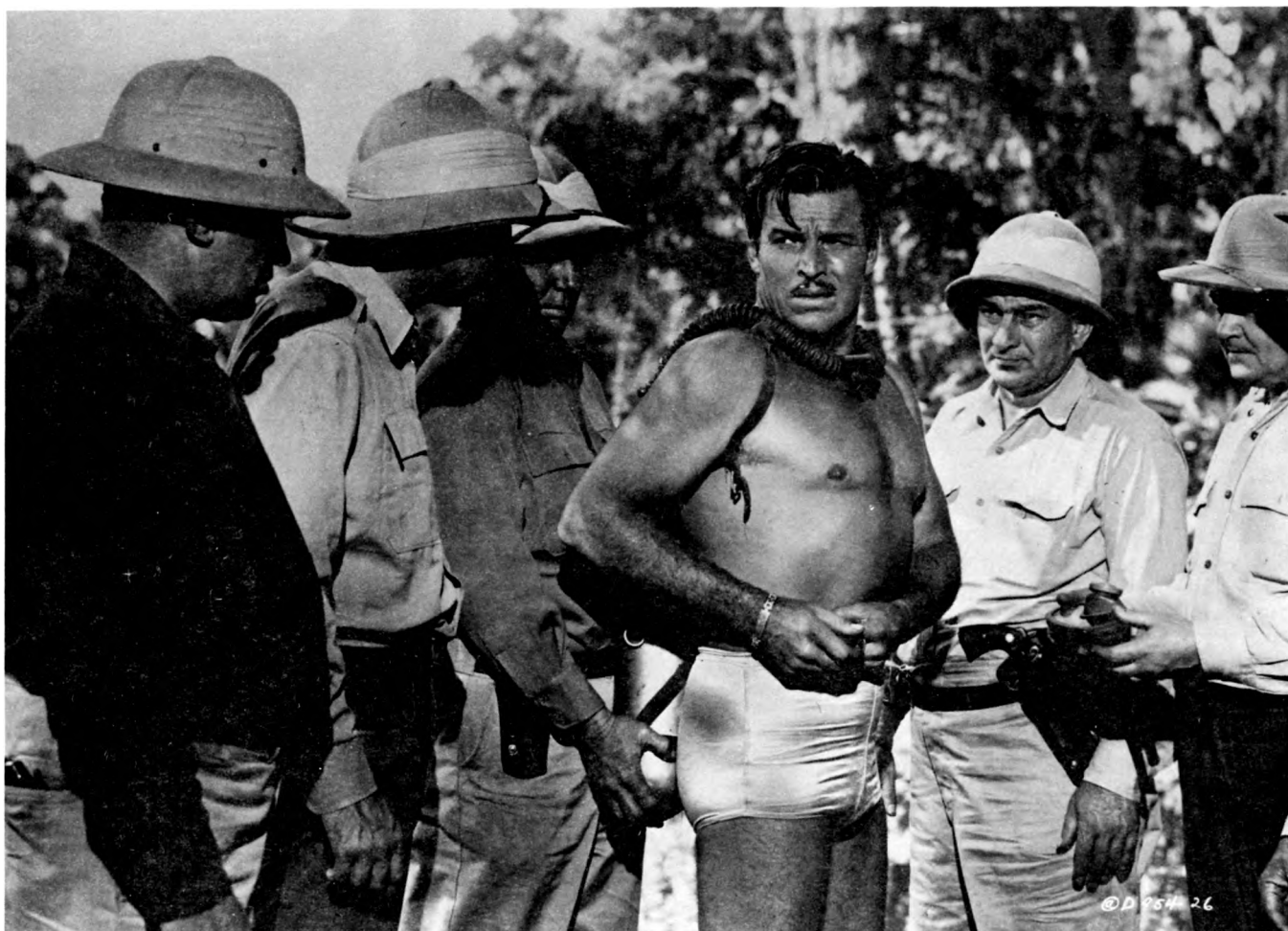
newest young star. The studio cast him in a series of Zane Grey westerns which also featured Randy Scott and Tom Keene. His first western was in 1933 and was entitled **To the Last Man**, which also featured Randy Scott.

Although his westerns and other features at Paramount were considered above par, his greatest audience would emerge when he began starring in chapter-plays - his very first was an independent serial which was distributed by Principle Release in 1933 entitled **Tarzan the Fearless**. This cheaply produced chapter-play didn't create an impact with the movie fans, but it did show his face for

twelve weeks on the screen and he continued on a regular basis when Universal Studios hired him from Paramount for the starring role in their great science-fiction serial, **Flash Gordon** and later condensed this serial into a seventy minute feature and gave it a new title of **Mars Attacks the World** - therefore, getting double duty and profits from their original investment. Paramount continued to use his services as a featured player in many of their "B" features in such titles as **Thrill of a Lifetime**, **Tip-off Girls**, **Hunted Men**, **Illegal Traffic** and others. In 1938 Universal again hired his services from Paramount for a

sequel to his first **Flash Gordon** serial, starring him in **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars** - a 15-chapter-play. They followed with Buster starring as the dynamic red-headed detective, **Red Barry** - for 13 weeks the audience was offered some thrilling action-packed scenes.

When cowboy star Buck Jones was signed by Paramount Studios to star with actress Helen Twelvetrees in **Unmarried**, Buster was given the role of a boxer, a part he had participated in real life. This particular film didn't benefit the careers of either actors because of the questionable theme of this unusual feature. Many of the fans who viewed the film left the theater



In 1950, Columbia Studios had signed Johnny Weissmuller for a series of jungle adventures based on Alex Raymond's famed comic strip "Jungle Jim." In one film **Captive Girl**, the two-famed swimming champions appeared together. It was one of the few times they appeared together in film. (Courtesy of Author's collection.)

with the question why both stars would want to play in such a production.

Before he had become famous as a serial star, Buster had established himself as a sagebrush hero - being named one of the top ten cowboy stars of the screen in 1936 (the same year he was loaned out to Universal). **Flash Gordon** went over so big with his action-loving audience that he starred in three more of these popular serials.

In 1939, in between his **Flash Gordon** serials, he also starred in **Buck Rogers**, another space adventure serial. By this time Buster was awarded the undis-

puted "King of the Serials."

The following year he made the sport pages by capturing the men's professional three-mile swimming event which was held in Los Angeles. He also appeared as a star performer of the New York and San Francisco World Fairs. After this stint as an aquaman performer, he resumed his picture-making career starring in various westerns and features. In 1941 P.R.C. signed him to star in the "Billy the Kid" series which also starred comic side-kick Al "Fuzzy" St. John, who had previously gained fame as a former Mack Sennett comedian.

They worked exceptionally well as a team, grinding out nearly four score of these "shoot 'em up westerns." During this time he also managed to appear in many non-western films as well.

In 1948, when the "B" western was on the decline, Buster had managed to enter the new media of television. About this time the "tube" was showing many of his old films, so when he appeared in his own physical fitness program, he was well established.

Nineteen fifty-five was a big year for Crabbe for he was signed up to star in a television action series based on the adventures of the Foreign Legion



One of Buster's early westerns at Paramount Studios. These were top-notch affairs with co-stars like Barton MacLaine, Gail Patrick (who would later act as producer for the early "Perry Mason" TV shows) and Muriel Kirkland. Most were based on the works of Zane Grey. (Courtesy of Author's Collection.)

entitled, "Captain Gallant." Also appearing was his young son "Cuffy", and "Fuzzy" Knight - Buster played the role of Captain Michael Gallant.

This series began at NBC-TV on February 13, 1955 and ended on February 17, 1957. It was resumed on June 6, 1960 - ran for three months through ABC-TV and picked up on October of 1960 by NBC-TV when the series ended on September 21, 1963. All in all, 65 episodes were produced, some are still being shown today.

After this successful series, Buster resumed his movie career and played in a number of

features and serials for such studios as Republic, Columbia, United Artists and Warner Bros. His last film was a western entitled, **Gunfighter of Abilene**.

In his great movie career Buster starred in nine action-laden serials - his last was for Columbia Studios entitled, **King of the Congo** in 1952...Buster Crabbe, "King of the Talking Serials."

Buster once remarked after someone had referred to him as "King of the Serials" - "I made only one "A" picture, **King of the Jungle**, in which I portrayed the Lion Man. The rest of

my productions were sub-B's or serials. I made nine of the serials, more than anyone else in talkies. Only William Desmond made more - 10 silent serials. I did three 'Flash Gordons,' two 'Tarzans,' a 'Buck Rogers,' plus 'Pirates of the High Seas,' 'Red Barry' and 'Sea Hound.'" "We knocked off 13 chapters in five or six weeks and I didn't allow for much dramatic skill. Some say my acting rose to the point of incompetence and then leveled off."

As for the "jungle yell" - Crabbe, in a 1980 interview, stated that he nor the legendary Johnny Weismuller, ever really



A publicity photo taken about the time Buster was loaned to Universal for **Flash Gordon**. (Courtesy of Author's Collection.)

gave a true rendition of the Tarzan yell.

"At first it contained three voices," he said, "the studio put together a baritone, a bass and a hog caller...finally they settled on a version by Tom Held, a film cutter for the studio who happened to be my father-in-law."

Buster made the trade journals once again, on one of his final appearances on television as an aging astronaut on the NBC series "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century." Gil Gerard played Buck Rogers in the series which ran from 1979-81.

For the interest of the Buster Crabbe fans - Buster had his

own television exercise-health show in New York during the early 1950's. Later for station WOR-TV, he hosted a program which showed his P.R.C. westerns. The success of this show led to another show on television entitled, "Buster Crabbe's Silver Saddle Wild West Show."

In the mid-sixties, his old **Flash Gordon** and **Buck Rogers** serials had grown quite popular with a new generation of science-fiction fans - he entered the recording field when he recreated his "Flash Gordon" character on an LP album. Today this album is a collector's item.

He was at one time an athletic director for a resort in the Catskill Mountains and became involved in the swimming pool business. Buster was also an author of a book on physical fitness entitled, **Energetics** (1970), a book devoted for the over 50 set.

Buster passed away of an apparent heart attack on Saturday, April 23, 1983 in Scottsdale, Arizona - he was 75 years old at the time.

There was a certain irony in his deathcoming on a Saturday, for as one of the most celebrated of the cliffhanger serial heroes Crabbe had successfully managed to escape "fictional" death on the silver screen every Saturday afternoon for decades.

Even as a "senior citizen" he established new records in the sport that led him to fame and fortune - in 1971 at the age of 63 he set a world record of six minutes, 37.1 seconds for the 400-meter in the senior men's freestyle. His Gold Medal winning time (also a world's record) in the 400-meter 39 years before was four minutes, 48.4 seconds.

One fact not too often brought up in many of the star's biographies was that he also partici-

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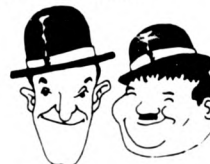
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pated in the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam, but although he placed third in the 1,500 meters he failed to win any medals or much notice - but it was an altogether different story in the 1932 Olympics. At the time he was working as a stock clerk in Los Angeles men's clothing store for only \$8.00 a week. When he did receive the part of the "jungle lord" as Tarzan for Paramount Studios in 1933, he was paid \$100 a week. This was exceptionally good money during those Depression years and was instrumental in the changing of his mind on becoming a lawyer.

-MDM

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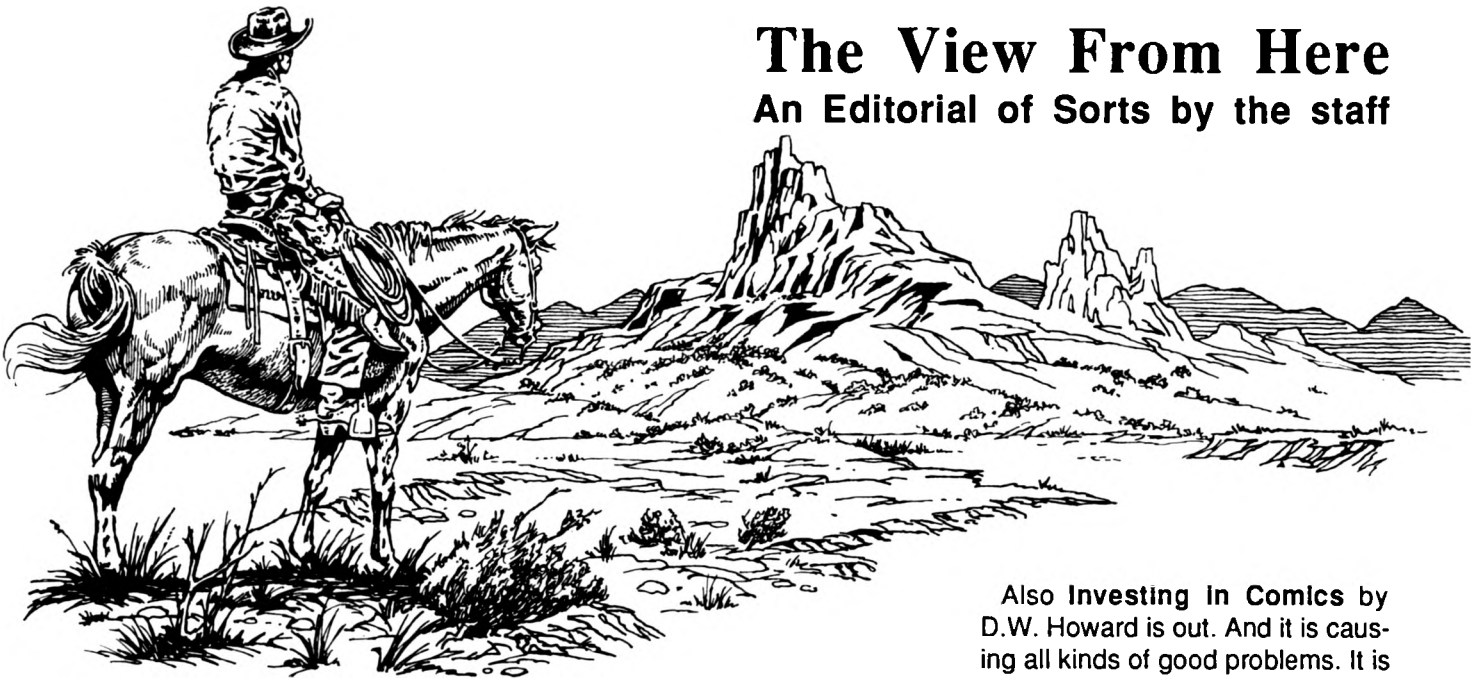
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The View From Here

An Editorial of Sorts by the staff

April 13, 1988

Well Pardners,

Six months have passed since the last issue and we had wanted to do better than that. Well, if plans turn out right there should be at least three more issues this year with the next issue going out in June or July, hopefully.

At least, the problems we are dealing with now come from success and improvements and not sickness or breakdowns.

We have all kinds of good news, so let us get at it.

The Friday Night Movie Goer's Association voted The World of Yesterday as "The Best Nostalgia Publishing House of the Year!" The award goes on to read in part "for over-coming tremendous handicaps this hard-working husband and wife team . . ."

We used that last quote to lead into our next piece of good news. We have doubled our size, at least, in personnel. In January, we took in a young couple from our church as pardners. Although they aren't as nutty about movies as we are, they like them and bring with them some much needed energy, vitality and a willingness to learn that will probably over a period of time completely revolutionize our operation. Their names are Tom and Marsha Har-

mon. You'll like them, they are quality people.

We have all been learning and working hard for the last three months. They, of course, have been getting a crash course in publishing. We have been continuing to learn about some of the new equipment we have purchased. You'll notice we have been experimenting with some new page layouts, typestyles and redesigning some headings like the one above.

We were told that you didn't like the "Good News, Bad News" title used last issue. We tried to come up with something fitting for serials but drew a blank. But since this was an all western issue, we borrowed the new design for **Under Western Skies** for this issue only, with the hopes maybe some of you can come up with some ideas.

We are still having some trouble with our paper supplies and switched to a new paper which is more readily available, so this issue contains two kinds. The whiter paper is the new stuff.

Paper problems caused all kinds of delays on our new books, but **The Life and Films of Buck Jones: The Silent Era** by Buck Rainey is finally out and getting some nice comments (see the ad for some of them) and reviews.

Also **Investing In Comics** by D.W. Howard is out. And it is causing all kinds of good problems. It is a best-seller. We had our largest pre-publication sale (about nine times normal) and biggest first printing. The first printing is almost sold out. Plus in the June or July issue of **Money** magazine our book will be mentioned. How about that! You can see we have been busy.

Plus we have been busy typesetting **The Films of Hopalong Cassidy** by "Mike" Nevins. Hoping this one will be done by the first part of June. We have been doing some work on the press and hope we can run some color photos inside of the book. No promises but we are going to try. It will probably sell for \$19.95 when released but if you want to order at \$14.95 prior to publication, o.k. We are not promising a June shipping date. With **Investing In Comics** being so successful, we just don't know!

Plus we have just got to get all the magazines on regular schedule and keep them coming out on schedule!!!!

As you can see good things are happening here and hopefully will continue to get better. The ultimate winner will be you our readers. Tell us how you like some of the changes.

God Bless, until next issue.

Ron and Linda Downey
Tom and Marsha Harmon



FAVORITES WESTERNS is published by Keitzer Publishing Co. who used to publish **Serial World**. **Serial World** was merged with **Favorites Westerns** several issues ago. Each issue has full color cover, and some of the issues have interior color. \$3.00 each.

1. Roy Rogers, Gabby Hayes, John Wayne, more.
2. Hopalong Cassidy, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Bill Elliott, Bill Cody; and more.
3. Lone Ranger; Fred Scott interview; Jack Randall, Bob Nolan; The Durango Kid; and more.
4. The Durango Kid; Tom Tyler; The Range Rider; Russell Hayden; and more.
5. Out of print, only available from the publisher in a xerox copy.
6. The Durango Kid; Kermit Maynard; Sky King; The Forgotten Cowboy Stars; and more.
7. David Sharpe; Stuntman's Hall of Fame; Robert J. Wilke; Bob Baker; Bad Men; and more.
8. Joan Woodbury; Tom Mix; Lone Ranger; Hopalong Cassidy; Durango Kid; and more.
9. Masquers Salute to Bob Steele; Ben Johnson; Ted Wells; Dick Foran; Lois January; and more.
10. Billy the Kid; Fred Scott; Art Acord; Hoppy; Buck Jones; Buzz Barton; Sunset Carson; and more.
11. Lone Ranger; Roy Rogers, Jr.; Louise Currie; Kermit Maynard; Reb Russell; and more.
12. Randolph Scott; Art Acord; Nell O'Day; Fred Thomson; Neil Hart; Buster Crabbe; and more.
13. Art Acord filmography; Lash LaRue; High Chaparral; James Warren; Buster Crabbe; and more.
14. Buck Jones; High Noon; The Deputy; Lone Ranger TV series; Audie Murphy; and more.
15. Slim Andrews; Dave O'Brien; Pat Buttram; Tales of Wells Fargo; Alan Ladd; Cannonball; and more.
16. Allen "Rocky" Lane; Anne Jeffreys; The Texan; Bob Baker; Comic Sidekicks; and much more.
17. Rod Cameron; Art Davis; Texas; Hoppy; Robert Taylor; Mark of Zorro; and more.
18. Tom Mix; Bells of Coranado; Lash LaRue; Ride the High Country; Rodd Wolff; Destry Rides Again; Reb Russell and Rebel; Jack Holt; and more.
19. Dickie Jones; George Houston; Muriel Evans; Dennis Weaver; Ed Finney; and more.
20. Jock Mahoney; The San Antonio Kid; David Sharpe; Tex Ritter; Jesse James serial trilogy; Custer's Last Stand; Don Coleman; and more.
21. Pals of the Golden West; John "Dusty" King; Eddie Dean; Charlton Heston; Lone Ranger; Ramsay Ames; Custer's Last Stand; Max Terhune; Sunset Carson; and more.
22. Custer's Last Stand; Yak Canutt; Cow Town; Peggy Stewart; John Wayne; Richard "Chito" Martin; Reno Browne; Annie Oakley; and more.
23. Holt of the Secret Service; Hopalong Cassidy; Bob Allen; Gene Autry and Smiley; Guinn "Big Boy" Williams; Anne Jeffreys; Sunset Carson; and more.
24. Custer's Last Stand, finish; The Magnificent Seven; Charles Starrett; Firecreek; Robert Livingston; Monte Hale; Holt of the Secret Service, finish; Fred Gilman; and more.
25. Jennifer Holt; Slim Andrews; Slim Binkley; Golden Boot Awards; Warner Bros. Westerns; Kenne Duncan; Buck and Roy; Pierce Lyden vs. Curley Bradley; and more.
26. Randolph Scott; George O'Brien-silent films; Johnny Crawford; Brenda Starr; Paramount Westerns; The Iron Claw; Errol Flynn; Beyond the Purple Hills; Tom Mix Festival; Slim Andrews; and more.
27. Gunfighters of the Northwest; MGM Westerns; John "Dusty" King; Audie Murphy; George O'Brien; and more.

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This book written by famed western historian Buck Rainey concerns fifteen of these movie cowboys, seven of whom began their western careers in the silent era and eight in the sound era: **Buddy Roosevelt, Tom Tyler, Bob Steele, Tim McCoy, Kermit Maynard,**

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Serial World was an excellent magazine for the fans of those great Saturday Serials. Many Photos. The first ten issues have been reprinted with new color covers and some new material. Issues 11 through 20 are available only from the publisher in xeroxed copies.

1. **Spy Hunters; Batman; Rocketman; Remembering Roy Barcroft; more.**
2. **John Hart; Profile of Serial Stars; Anthony Warder; B-Western Stars; more.**
3. **Trader Tom; Harry Lauter interview; Superman; John Hart interview; more.**
4. **Jack Mulhall interview; Don 'Red' Barry; Serial Villains; Superman synopsis part 1; more.**
5. **Tim Tyler's Luck; Frankie Thomas interview; Superman synopsis part 2; more.**
6. **Superman synopsis part 3; Serial Ratings; Comic Heroes on the Screen; Duncan Renaldo interview; more.**
7. **Superman synopsis part 4; Captain Video; Louise Currie interview; and more.**
8. **Ace Drummond; Terry Frost interview; Ray 'Crash' Corrigan; Superman finish; more.**
9. **Marshal Reed interview; The Great Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok; Jungle Menace part 1; more.**
10. **Tris Coffin interview; Ralph Byrd; Deadwood Dick; Jungle Menace conclusion; more.**

The following have color covers and the higher numbers have some interior color. See note above about issues 11 through 20.

21. **NBC's Cliffhanger's series; The Return of Chandu; The Roar of the Iron Horse finish; more.**
22. **Curse of Dracula story line; Crimson Ghost part 1; Revisiting the Lost City; more.**
23. **Jungle Girl; King of the Forest Rangers; Crimson Ghost part 2; Jack Armstrong part 1; more.**
24. **Jungle Queen; Crimson Ghost part 2; Jack Armstrong finish; more.**
25. **The Lost City part 1; Crimson Ghost finish; Brick Bradford; more.**
26. **Miracle Rider part 1; The Lost City part 2; The Lone Ranger Rides Again part 1; more.**
27. **The Lost City part 3; The Lone Ranger Rides Again finish; The Miracle Rider part 2; more.**
28. **Drums of Fu Manchu part 1; Miracle Rider finish; Lost City part 4; Smilin' Jack bubble gum cards; more.**
29. **Drums of Fu Manchu finish; Lost City finish; The New Adventures of Batman & Robin; more.**
30. **The Spider's Web part 1; The Phantom of the Air; Serial Heroes on Record; more.**
31. **The Spider's Web finish; The Purple Monster Strikes part 1; Serial Heroes on Record part 2; more.**
32. **Purple Monster finish; The Fire Fighters; The Sea Hound; Blake of Scotland Yard part 1; more.**
33. **Blake of Scotland Yard finish; Chick Carter Detective; The Range Fighter; The Black Book; more.**
34. **Riders of Death Valley; King of the Rocketmen; Pearl White; The Fast Express; more.**
35. **Daredevils of the Red Circle part 1; Dave Sharpe; Blazing the Overland Trail; John Duncan; more.**
36. **G-Men vs. The Black Dragon part 1; Dead End Kids; Daredevils of the Red Circle finish; more.**
37. **Interviews with Carol Foreman and Tom Steele.**

After issue 37, Serial World was merged with Favorite Westerns.

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A Buck Rainey book is characterized by careful research; he gets his facts straight. He writes so well that his subjects come to life. And he loads his books with photos; this one has 260. Lois Rubin's review in *Classic Images*.

Since Buck Rainey wrote "The Saga of Buck Jones" (now out of print), he has wanted to redo the work adding more material. Buck Jones was and is his hero and since the original book he has gathered new information about his hero. Working with Buck Jones' widow and family he has gathered the most complete biography of Buck Jones and to top it off he has put together a book on the Buck Jones films like the popular "Films of" series. Put them together and you have a monumental undertaking. But there is still more. Buck has been collecting photos of Buck Jones for years, add to that photos loaned from the Jones' family and each volume of this two-volume work has lots of photos spread through the text and a special photo scrapbook section. If you are into westerns, silent films or just Buck Jones this will be a book you will want in your collection.

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1. Mae West on Broadway, more (24)
2. Ma and Pa Kettle, more (28)
7. Abbott & Costello (part 1); and Their Records; Andy Shuford, more (40)
8. Aesop's Fables Cartoons; Ken Maynard; Fanny Brice; more (44)
12. Al Jolson; His Records; Glenn Miller; Bobby Benson; Fred Thomson Filmography; more (78)
16. Spike Jones; Baby Sandy; Superman; Alice Faye on 78s; Film Collecting; (48)
20. Ralph Byrd; Lum & Abner; Zena Keefe; The Buster Brown Gang; Autographs; more (78)
22. The Shadow; Sound Films of Harold Lloyd; Henry Hall; Smith & Dale; more (60)
23. Florida as Hollywood East; Ruth Donnelly; Thelma Todd; Vilma Banky; more (66)
25. Two article special tribute to Agnes Moorehead; Silent Cliffhangers-conclusion; more (88)
26. Walk of the Stars Directory; Nigel Bruce; Radio Scrapbook; more (76)
29. Fanny Brice; Ed Wynn; Jack Benny; Laurel and Hardy; Eddie Cantor; Jimmy Durante; more (68)
31. Charlie Chan; Lori Nelson; Evans' 1980 Chronicle; Captain America serial; more (78)
32. Dick Purcell with Filmography (part 1); Otto Kruger; Jack Norton; Spy Smasher serial; more (74)
34. Glenn Miller; Billy Barty; Radio Scrapbook; more (72)
39. Jackie Moran & Marcia Mae Jones; Stymie; Farina; Buckwheat; Darla; more (60)
41. Evans' 1982 Chronicle; Anita Garvin; Popeye; more (52)
42. Jane Wyman; Nan Wynn; Katherine Hepburn; Beulah Bondi; more (52)

In February, 1984, The World of Yesterday was merged with The Films of Yesteryear to make a new publication called Double Feature.

43. Universal's Aces of Action; Harold Russell; The Films of 1946, part 2; more (52)

The Golden Years of Radio & TV

Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are out of print but will be reprinted when storage space and production time become available.

6. Andy Devine; Gloria Henry; Science Fiction on Radio; Dan Russo; Jimmy Dorsey; "Hunter" TV Log; more (60)

The Films of Yesteryear

Numbers 1, 2, 4 and 7 are out of print but will be reprinted when storage space and production time allow.

3. Part 1 of a Filmography of Producers Releasing Corporation (86)
5. Part 1 of a Film Index for 1946 (92)

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